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**FROM THE CONGO
TO THE NIGER AND THE NILE**

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Akom Rock, on the watershed between the Congo and Nyong
Water-colour by E. M. Heims

FROM THE CONGO
TO
THE NIGER AND THE NILE

AN ACCOUNT OF THE
GERMAN CENTRAL AFRICAN EXPEDITION
OF 1910-1911 BY
ADOLF FRIEDRICH
DUKE OF MECKLENBURG

WITH 514 ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS AND DRAWINGS
AND A MAP

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By DR H. SCHUBOTZ

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CHAPTERS XIV to XVIII
FROM FORT ARCHAMBAULT
TO THE NILE

BY

DR H. SCHUBOTZ

CHAPTER XIV

ON THE SHARI AND UBANGI RIVERS

NEVER shall I forget the day on which my carefully thought-out plan for reaching the Nile through the Belgian Uelle district received the sanction of our leader.

It was the evening of the 2nd of February 1911, in the neighbourhood of the Bahr Sara. Fort Archambault was at that time my headquarters; I was on my way back from an expedition to the Niellim Mountains, sixty miles to the north, and I was feeling somewhat discouraged at the meagre results of my zoological investigations. I had just completed a long, tedious march across a waterless, sun-scorched plain, and the constant troubles with the bearers together with the physical discomforts of the journey had depressed my spirits to their lowest ebb. My kind host in Fort Archambault, Captain Cross, not realising the state of affairs in the Sara district, had allowed me to set off without a military escort. The result was that I had the greatest difficulty in persuading the chiefs to supply me with bearers. They never accompanied me further than the next village, and I had no means of detaining them by force. To-day, for the first time in all my African travels, I had been obliged to submit to being carried in a litter. A gastric complaint, induced by drinking water to which an excessive quantity of alum had been added

as a purifying agent, made riding or walking impossible. Weakened by illness, exhausted by the sweltering heat, and racked with pain, I presently collapsed altogether, much to the alarm of my "boys," who had hitherto regarded me as a most vigorous individual. They deposited me in the shade of a mimosa tree, and when I regained consciousness I saw them standing whispering together with anxious faces.

They were in a great panic, probably not so much from any special affection for me, but rather because they feared that without me they would never reach their distant homes in Togo and the Cameroons. A litter was brought, and at a funeral pace we followed the bearers to camp, which was fortunately not far off, in a tiny Sara hamlet composed of only seven huts. The chief was a gigantic man with a good-humoured face, and he seemed disposed to be friendly. He brought me some fresh milk and a couple of eggs, and by the evening I felt well enough to sit in a deck-chair in front of my tent.

My bearers had once more taken French leave, and the chief declared that he could supply only seven men, whereas I required at least twenty-five. I was exceedingly angry. Not with the natives for refusing to act as carriers; one could hardly blame them, seeing that the money they earn is of very little use to them; neither did I resent Captain Cross' action in sending me without a military escort, for he did not realise the conditions prevailing here, and could have no idea of the difficulties I was to encounter. But I felt embittered against the "red tapists" who sit in their comfortable offices and preach humanity; I wished they could spend a few days travelling in

this country, left to their own devices and obliged to procure bearers as well as food for themselves and their men. They would very soon discard all their politeness and humanitarian ideas, which the very natives despise. "Might is right" must be the motto of every intending colonist; a hundred times have I learned this by bitter experience, for friendly persuasion will never induce a Sara native to carry a tin box for you. He will do so only if he knows that his refusal will result in his hut being burned down by soldiers. Unfortunately there were not enough available soldiers; the Fort Archambault company was scattered in all directions, and there was no other nearer than Ndele, whose garrison was at the moment fighting Sultan Senussi. The country was by no means properly subdued, and the French were too much taken up with the rebellion in Wadai to be able to do more than protect the Ubangi-Gribingi-Shari main road.

My mind was occupied with these and similar thoughts as I sat before my tent near the Bahr Sara on the evening of the 2nd of February, helpless and destitute of bearers. Suddenly a native brought word that a caravan was approaching, and it turned out to be a party of twenty-five Niellim men sent me by Captain Cross under escort of two Senegalese soldiers, in answer to a letter that I had despatched to him a few days before. My immediate difficulties were thus at an end. Still more welcome was a letter from the Duke, with whom I had had no communication since leaving him on the 5th of October 1910. Our letters had either been lost en route, or else did not reach their destination for many months. His most important news, as far as I was concerned, was that

the expedition had to be again divided owing to political unrest in the North, and that consequently von Wiese and I were to be the only members of the party returning home by way of the Nile. The Duke agreed to my proposal that the Uelle district should be allotted to me,

The main zoological problem for the 1910-1911 expedition was the investigation of the fauna in the northern part of the great Equatorial primeval forest, and of the animal world inhabiting the adjoining plains of the Soudan.

The collection made by the English explorer, Alexander Gosling, in the primeval forest of the Uelle district shows a great wealth of species of special scientific interest. At the head of the list stands the okapi, which is to be found chiefly in the neighbourhood of Angu. It was my ambition to secure for the museums at home one or more specimens of this big, shy, forest antelope. Apart from the above-mentioned scientific reasons, I had important political grounds for adopting this route, in that it would be comparatively easy to traverse the Uelle district, even with a large caravan. All the Belgian officers and officials that I had met who were experienced travellers in this part of the country, painted it in the most glowing colours, and assured me that it was densely populated with sturdy well-disciplined negroes, admirably adapted for the work of carrying; that the necessaries of life were easily obtained, bananas, maize, goats, and even cattle being plentiful; and that good roads culminated in the well-kept main road connecting the Congo and the Nile.

All this was the best possible news for a traveller coming from the Ubangi and Shari basins, where it

was one man's work to overcome the trivial difficulties in obtaining bearers and provisions, leaving scant time for scientific research. My spirits rose, and I hoped that under such favourable auspices I should be able to enrich my zoological collection and give it a value proportionate to the heavy costs of our equipment.

Following the instructions of His Highness the Duke, I rapidly brought my work in the Middle Shari district to a conclusion, and proceeded by forced marches back to the Ubangi via Fort Crampel. I was in hopes of meeting von Wiese either in Fort Possel or in Mobaye, as I had inadvertently passed him on my way to Archambault. On the 1st of April I arrived at Possel, but my hopes were not fulfilled. For six months I had been travelling alone, and since parting with the Duke I had met no member of our expedition, so that I was anxious to come across von Wiese, and travel in his company at any rate for a short distance. This hope was not, however, destined to be fulfilled until the 11th of October 1911, when we met at last in Khartoum.

The extraordinary difficulties which I encountered on the Ubangi were the cause of my delayed arrival in Mobaye and Yakoma. During the rainy season, from June to November, the steamers accomplish the two hundred miles in four days, but in November the steamer service ceases owing to the shallow water, and is replaced by steel boats holding one or two tons, or else by canoes which take fourteen instead of four days to reach Mobaye. At the height of the dry season in January and February, this voyage is said to be very pleasant, the current being then comparatively weak, and the wealth of bird life varying

the monotony. But it is very different in April; at this time of the year the first thunderstorms, which are characterised by unusual violence, rapidly raise the level of the river until it becomes a raging torrent.

The great birds: marabouts, storks, pelicans, ibises, herons, and various kinds of vultures that haunt the sandbanks during the dry season in search of stranded fish and other animal refuse, have all disappeared. They have migrated to drier regions, and the only birds that remain faithful to the densely wooded banks of the river are a few geese and ducks, lapwings and plovers, fishing birds, and the powerful lake eagles (*Gypohierax angolensis* is more common than *Haliaëtus vocifer* on the Middle Ubangi), but they are distributed over a wide area, and consequently provide but little excitement for the traveller. He is sadly in need of entertainment, for he has nothing to read but newspapers two or three months old, which are soon exhausted; and though here in darkest Africa he eagerly devours even the advertisement sheet, this is apt to pall in the long run.

I had constant trouble with the boatmen. From Possel to Mobaye I employed Banziris who, though competent rowers, are very lazy, and the most inveterate thieves that I have ever come across. They stole everything they could lay their hands on, even to the buckles of my gun-straps and saddlery, knives and other indispensable articles. The mismanagement of the French Government is to blame for the conduct of the natives. Physical punishment is no longer allowed, although all experienced French officials admit that this is the only effective means of educating the negroes. The sole incentive which



1. The son of Ngurru, Sultan of the Asanda.



2. Victims of sleeping-sickness in Yakoma.



3. Huts of the Asanda-Avungura.



4. Painted hut of the Asanda-Abandja.

has any moral effect on them, that is to say, the fear of punishment, has thus lost much of its power; for imprisonment, even when accompanied by hard labour, does not make nearly the same impression on their minds as a sound thrashing.

There is hardly any institution so universal and consequently so desirable among the negroes as physical punishment, and far-seeing governments, like the British, Belgian, and German, although they have limited its application, have hesitated to do away with it altogether. On one occasion when I complained to a Banziri chief of the thieving propensities of one of his people, I observed with amusement that he personally administered to the culprit the customary five and twenty strokes. I was enjoying the hospitality of the Government, so that I could not venture to order corporal punishment myself; I had to content myself with conveying the culprit bound to Mobaye, where I could give him up to justice.

The manner in which the natives bind prisoners is very brutal; they tie their wrists behind their backs with tight cords that cut into the flesh, and then, to prevent any possible evasion, they fasten the arms again higher up at the elbow. This is very painful, and limits the prisoner's movements to a most uncomfortable extent. When I saw the thieves again in the evening after they had lain for twelve hours in the boat bound in this fashion, they were stiff and lame, and moaned piteously. I had mercy on them, and ordered the ropes to be cut, informing them that, provided they made no attempt to escape, they might travel in freedom the next day. Two of them rewarded my clemency by remaining, but the third,

who was the chief offender, was far away by the following morning.

In attempting to administer justice in this country, the authorities are obliged to rely to a great extent on the co-operation of the prisoner. Captain Cross told me incidentally that he dared not annoy his prisoners too much, otherwise they ran away; he had two patricides in his prison who were condemned to two years' penal servitude, which does not seem a very severe sentence. In six months one had decamped, whereupon the other, who was a carpenter, received permission to remain at liberty during the day, provided he spent the night in prison. Justice was in this way satisfied, while Captain Cross retained his carpenter.

More annoying for me even than the thefts of the natives were the violent storms which on several occasions overtook me on the Ubangi. Twice I was far from a village, and at a point where the bank was too steep to permit us to land. Sheets of water poured down upon us, and in a moment had half filled the boat. Several hours elapsed before we could reach the village, pitch our tents, and get the loads into a dry place. Even my bed was wet, and I passed a miserable night.

Another time matters were even worse. I had left my boat at noon in order to stretch my limbs by walking to the next village, leaving the boats to follow. I had scarcely started when it began to rain, first a few drops, then a sharp shower, and finally in buckets. A half-grown lad whom I had taken from a village, guided me along a narrow path through the dripping bushes, through waist-deep swamps, over plains covered with buffalo spoor and finally across country.

After wandering aimlessly for some hours, I asked him sharply where he was going, and he admitted with tears in his eyes that he had lost the way owing to the rain having obscured his sight. So we made our way back to the river and followed it as far as the village, which in this manner could not be missed. I warmed myself at the fire with the natives in a hospitable hut. The boats did not appear until after sunset, and had to be unloaded by the light of two lanterns. The steep bank and slippery ground made this a difficult task, and in order to encourage the wet and exhausted men, I stood on the shore, took each one by the hand, and dragged him up with his load. Many of them fell all the same and broke some of the contents of the cases, thus adding to the damage already done by the water. When I reached Mobaye a day and a half later, my guns, photographic apparatus, and collection of birds presented a lamentable appearance. Out of thirty dozen photographic plates, only three dozen could be used.

I lost a valuable assistant in the person of Kwamfi, an old Togo negro. He was looking for a badly wounded buffalo when he encountered the cow, who was uninjured, and had spent the whole night beside her dying mate. She attacked Kwamfi so suddenly that he had no time either to fly or to defend himself, and she gored him twice, piercing his heart. This happened on the morning of the 16th of April; I marked the day in my calendar with a cross, and realised that it was Easter Sunday, and that while the bells were pealing at home, I might easily have lost my life instead of old Kwamfi.

This old negro was my best assistant, the only one who thoroughly understood how to preserve

specimens, and who took a genuine pleasure in his work.

It took me twelve days to traverse the two hundred miles between Possel and Mobaye. There is no mode of travelling so wearisome as proceeding up-stream in a small boat, so that I was thankful to reach Mobaye, and to know that the most disagreeable part of the journey lay behind me. But Yakoma, and not Mobaye, was to be the starting-point of my Uelle travels, and I had still seventy-five miles to traverse.

Lieutenant Scharf, the commandant of the Belgian station, Banzyville, opposite Mobaye, supplied me with a large steel boat capable of carrying all my eighty loads. Twenty-five rowers wearily paddled the heavy craft up-stream. They were not the sturdy Banziris, but half-grown youths from the neighbourhood of Banzyville, many of them weakened by sleeping-sickness, so that it took me seven days, travelling twelve hours a day, to reach Yakoma.

I arrived here on the 2nd of May, weary and exhausted, but my spirits rose at the sight of the Uelle River. Now at any rate the worst part of my journey was over. Seven hundred and fifty miles still separated me from the Nile, which is no trifle when it has to be traversed on foot or on horseback; but I was homeward bound, every day bringing me nearer to the broad river, which was the easiest way back to Germany.

CHAPTER XV

ON THE ROAD TO ANGU

It took fourteen days before all the preparations for my long land journey were complete, and I could think of setting out from Yakoma. All my cases had to be repacked, and my supply of wares for exchange with the Uelle population had to be augmented and adapted to their tastes. Among the four white men at Yakoma there was a cattle breeder, Monsieur Vaes-Peels, who had travelled a great deal in the Uelle district, and was able to give me valuable advice.

This prolonged rest was very beneficial to my health. The foregoing months of travelling in the Ubangi district had been a great strain on my nervous system, and being continually wet, and sleeping in soaked bed-clothes, had brought on a feverish cold. But I rapidly recovered, thanks to the rest at Yakoma, and thanks to the care of Dr Zerbini the station doctor.

I employed my leisure in the study of sleeping-sickness. There is at Yakoma a Government sleeping-sickness hospital, where several hundred patients are under treatment. (Illus. 2.) Twice a week they are given injections of atoxyl. The results are the same as were described by Koch in his report of the proceedings of the German sleeping-sickness expedition in the neighbourhood of Lake Victoria. Persevering

treatment causes the trypanosoma to disappear from the blood and lymph, but it is still doubtful whether this constitutes a permanent cure. Patients in Yakoma cannot be induced to remain long enough in hospital. Most of them are out-patients and attend only for the treatment on the appointed days, so that it is very difficult to follow up the results of an apparent cure.

The Uelle district itself is still free from human sleeping-sickness. This is the more remarkable in that the banks of the Uelle as far as Bambili are thickly wooded and are swarming with the mosquito (*Glossina palpalis*), which is the carrier of the disease. There is, moreover, a good deal of river traffic, which has existed for many years, and still continues. But the fact remains that there is no sleeping-sickness to be found beyond Bondo, formerly known as Djabir, which is only six days' journey from Yakoma.

On the morning of the 17th of May I set out from Yakoma. The road to the Uelle district passes through the little station Monga, the last of the Ubangi district. It is inhabited by a few Europeans, and is beautifully situated near an imposing waterfall of the Bili River. The commandant, a young Belgian officer, unfortunately was not familiar with the surrounding country, and could not give me directions as to my route.

There was also a dearth of bearers, and although armed messengers, known as "pistonniers," had been sent out in every direction, only forty men turned up the following morning instead of the hundred that were needed. I was obliged to take convicts to make up the requisite number of bearers; these were criminals, chained five or six together, and condemned



5. Squirrel with flying-membranes.



6. Hunter with the prepared skin of the Okapi.



7. *Oapia Johnstoni*.

to hard labour on the station. One of them spoke Kisuaheli, an East African language which I had not heard for such a long time that it sounded almost as pleasantly in my ears as my native tongue. My host was in hopes that at the end of a three or four hours' journey I should find other bearers in the large village of Bangassu, but as he admitted that he had never visited this village, I did not place much reliance on his words. I left Monga at about noon. There was no proper road, merely a narrow, almost invisible track winding in and out through the swamps of the dense, primeval forest. I had injured my foot, so whenever it was possible, I rode the horse that had kindly been lent to me in Yakoma; many times I was obliged to lie flat on his back, Indian-fashion, and finally a low branch lifted me right out of the saddle.

A four hours' march brought us to a river about thirty feet wide, in the thickest part of the forest. A tree trunk served as a bridge, affording an easy passage for the men, but impossible for the horse. The bank on our side was six feet high, and almost perpendicular; a large tree submerged in the water formed another serious obstacle, whilst on the opposite bank the dense undergrowth made landing very difficult. What was to be done? There seemed little chance of getting the animal safely across, for if he became entangled in the branches in mid-stream, he would most likely break a leg, and would have to be shot. I thought for a moment of sending him back to Yakoma, but then I remembered that in that case I should have to walk on my lame feet all the way to Bondo. So I decided to take the risk and try to get the horse across, in which I was success-

ful. Nobody knows what he can accomplish until he tries !

The saddle was removed, and the horse brought close to the edge of the river, and then all the men pushed together so that he fell with a loud splash into the stream. He was caught for a moment in the submerged tree, but he struck out wildly, and fortunately extricated himself and succeeded in landing safely on the opposite bank, where a small clearance had been made. An hour later we reached another river, the Bili, which is about sixty feet in breadth at this point. Here, however, there were boats which enabled us to cross without difficulty. The boatmen informed us that Bangassu was still a long way off, and that we could not possibly arrive there before midnight ; we had already been marching for six hours instead of three, which, according to the commandant of Monga, was the time required for the journey to Bangassu. My bed, tent, and cooking apparatus had all been sent on ahead, so that I was forced to push on, in spite of the growing darkness, as I did not feel inclined to camp out in the open air, under a sky that threatened rain.

Half an hour later, to my surprise, we came to a large village. An aged sultan, dressed in white European clothes, came out to meet me, surrounded by a number of warriors, one of whom carried a large trumpet. This was not Bangassu, but a neighbouring village, the existence of which was unknown to me. The old man escorted me through his village. On each side of the street stood a long row of huts, painted white, to which the last rays of the setting sun imparted a rosy glow. A crowd of women and children followed us at a respectful distance, and



Okapi from the virgin forest near Angu



hiding behind huts and bananas trees, peeped nervously and inquisitively at those two strange and marvellous beasts: the white man and his horse. It made me feel once more that I was a very fine fellow, and I speedily forgot all the troubles of the day's march. In Africa joy and sorrow are very closely related.

As we left the village we were met by two natives, who introduced themselves as messengers sent by Bangassu to conduct us to his residence. This proved to have been a very necessary precaution, for darkness had now fallen and the path led through the forest. I was obliged to take hold of my guide's loin-cloth as I could not see an inch in front of me, but eventually we reached Bangassu in safety.

The sultan, surrounded by a great crowd of people, was awaiting my arrival. I was the first white man to visit his village, and he was evidently much impressed by all my luggage, my military escort, my spacious tent, and especially by my horse, which was something quite new to these savages. Bangassu agreed to provide me with a hundred bearers the following day. Soon after midnight the great drum sounded outside the sultan's hut, summoning bearers from all the neighbouring villages. For a long time I lay awake listening to its melodious tones. In the distance other drums could be heard, answering the sultan's call, and echoing in the deepest recesses of the slumbering forest.

These drums, here as elsewhere in the Congo basin, are made from large hollowed tree trunks, from which wonderfully modulated tones can be produced by means of a pair of drum-sticks. In answer to the summons, a hundred and sixty bearers presented themselves the

next morning to convey my eighty loads to the village of Ngurru, which was one day's journey off. I rewarded Sultan Bangassu with a few pounds of salt, two barrels of black powder, and fifty percussion caps, which are highly valued in this country.

It was a beautiful summer's day, without a cloud in the sky. Three hours' march brought us to the next village belonging to Sultan Ngurru. His son, who is the village chief (illus. 1), came to meet me bringing presents of fowls and eggs, and accompanied me to his father's residence, two hours further on. It was a large village, thousands of huts being built on each side of the wide, well-kept road. The inhabitants are Asandes, or Niam-Niams, the most powerful tribe in the Uelle district. Their huts are for the most part rectangular, with mud walls, and conical roofs made of plaited leaves, supported by pillars. But the most remarkable thing about them is their decoration. (Illus. 4.) The white-washed walls of almost all the huts are adorned with paintings, most of them representing one or other of the following subjects: a man carrying a gun (generally a blue and red Congo soldier); a white man sitting at a table with bottles on it; an elephant (sometimes depicted just as he is being shot by the man with the gun); a leopard; and a horse.

Sultan Ngurru came to meet me, followed by a crowd of natives. A man of about forty, of commanding appearance, he was dressed in a long coloured shirt, khaki breeches, brown stockings, the usual shoes worn in the Soudan, and a scarlet fez. His stout figure and placid, clean-shaven face, with a fairly small nose and somewhat prominent eyes gave him a certain dignity like that of a priest or an actor,

or at any rate like that of an individual who is accustomed to be listened to when he speaks. It took fully an hour to reach the part of the village where he resides, and where I was shown into a brand-new guest house for Europeans. I gave the sultan a chair and a whisky and soda, a token of esteem which I was in the habit of offering to influential chiefs, in order to strengthen their authority over their subjects. To my request for bearers Ngurru made the gratifying reply that I could have as many men as I wanted. He spoke but little, probably from embarrassment, seeing that I was only the second white man with whom he had come in contact. He had no notion what to do with the cigar that I offered him, and when I turned my back on him for an instant, he took the opportunity of throwing it away.

The following days passed much in the same way. I marched by easy stages through a thickly populated country, whose influential chiefs were most anxious to meet the wishes of a white man in every possible way. The last sultan in whose village I spent the night before arriving in Bondo, was Ndekkere who had been decorated by Leopold the Second with a large copper medal. He rode to meet me on a mule, and his body-guard, composed of eight former Congo soldiers armed with percussion guns, was drawn up in my honour. The next day's march brought me to Djabir.

Djabir is the ancient Asande name for an important station on the Uelle River, officially known as Bondo. Djabir was the most influential sultan in the Western Uelle district, and was so submissive to the Belgians, and so useful to them in procuring india-rubber and ivory, that they raised him to the rank

of captain, paying him the corresponding salary. He could neither read nor write, but the importance of his position went to his head, so that one day he refused to obey the Government. The result was that four hundred soldiers were sent to depose him, and he was obliged to fly into French territory, where he is said to be still living surrounded by a few faithful men and women. With a view to effacing his memory, the name of the station was officially changed to Bondo.

As I approached the station, five Europeans headed by the "chef de zone" Commandant Bareau, rode to meet me. They welcomed me in the most friendly manner, and allotted to me the finest house in the station. It was a handsome brick building, the largest that I have seen anywhere in Central Africa. It contained two lofty rooms opening on to a wide verandah, with a beautiful view over the river, which is here nearly a thousand feet in width.

The beautiful scenery in the neighbourhood of Bondo, the excellence of my accommodation, and the friendly hospitality of Commandant Bareau, combined to make my visit a very pleasant one, and I would gladly have prolonged it. I was, however, most anxious to reach the okapi district, which Commandant van der Cruyssen had described to me as being situated between the stations of Likati and Angu, on the south bank of the Uelle. This information was confirmed by Commandant Bareau, who added that Angu would be my best headquarters.

The name of Angu was not unknown to me; I remembered that the only photographs of a living okapi had been taken in this neighbourhood. I also knew of Angu from Boyd Alexander's account of his travels "From the Niger to the Nile."

It was a curious fact that ever since leaving Niellim, I had been travelling on the track of this unfortunate expedition. This was not particularly encouraging for me, seeing that none of the recent African explorers have encountered such insuperable obstacles or met with such severe losses as the Englishmen Alexander and Gosling. It cannot, however, be denied that their itinerary was at fault.

The English Lieutenant Boyd Alexander, who was a well-known ornithologist and an experienced African traveller, had an idea that he could cross the continent by an almost uninterrupted water route, formed by the large rivers: the Niger, Benue, Shari, Ubangi, Uelle, and Nile. He hoped in this way to be able to follow the wanderings of certain migratory birds, which in travelling between the East and West Coasts always seem to take the same course as the great rivers.

There was one practical advantage attached to this plan: he was quite independent of bearers, for all his baggage was stowed in two large, specially constructed steel boats. But he made a great mistake in the direction adopted by the expedition. Instead of starting from the Upper Uelle, whither his boats could have been brought up the White Nile, and travelling down the above-mentioned rivers, Alexander for some unaccountable reason chose the reverse direction. This resulted in a ceaseless struggle to propel the heavily laden boats against the raging current. The chief characteristics of the African rivers are that they are shallow and broad, whilst the current is violent, and they are frequently interrupted by rapids forming serious obstacles to navigation.

Consequently Boyd Alexander took nearly three years to traverse a distance which he could easily have accomplished in half the time. And it was not only time lost, but he was obliged to keep in touch with his boats, so that his observations and collections were much circumscribed. I have myself travelled for several months at a time up the Ubangi in a boat rowed by natives against the current of a river swollen by the rainy season, so that I fully realise the strain on the nervous system of this slow monotonous voyage, apart from the constant quarrels with the boatmen.

Of his three companions, only one, the topographer Talbot, returned to England at the conclusion of his work in British Nigeria. His brother, Captain Claud Alexander, died of dysentery in the neighbourhood of Lake Tchad, and Captain C. B. Gosling, "one of the best and bravest fellows that ever lived" (he was thus described in his obituary notice) reached the Uelle with Boyd Alexander. He was one of the finest sportsmen in England, physically well developed, and admirably adapted for enduring the fatigues of African travel. His great ambition was to shoot an okapi and add it to his collection of African big game. Near Angu he hunted for a fortnight, regardless of his health, but without success. He carried away the germs of blackwater fever, and fell ill soon after leaving Angu. His vigorous constitution carried him through the first attack, but two weeks later he succumbed to the fever at Niangara, and was buried in the cemetery there.

Boyd Alexander alone, having surmounted incredible difficulties, exhausted and broken down in health, reached his goal, the White Nile. But he



8. The Okapi exhibited in the Senckenberg Museum at Frankfurt.



9. Tame elephants bathing.



10. Elephants ploughing.

was not to escape his fate, and he too lies in African soil. Soon after his return to England he set off on a fresh journey, intending to travel from Lake Tchad to the Nile along the route formerly adopted by Nachtigal.

In spite of the warnings of the French authorities, he persisted in penetrating the French Wadai district, and was murdered by the natives.

His book "From the Niger to the Nile" provided my only reading for several months. I was therefore familiar with the aims and fate of this unlucky expedition, and felt the warmest sympathy for its members, while their persevering enthusiasm for our common task aroused my profound admiration. On reaching Niangara, I was impelled to visit Gosling's grave, and felt as though I were taking leave of a dead friend.

CHAPTER XVI

THE HOME OF THE OKAPI

ANGU is on the south bank of the Uelle, four days' journey up-stream from Bondo. The overland route via Likati takes twice as long, so I decided, albeit unwillingly, in favour of travelling once more by boat. The voyage was more pleasant than I had anticipated, for the boats were large and roomy, the rowers strong and skilful, and the river scenery more attractive than any I have seen in Africa.

The Uelle is a wide river, but innumerable islands divide it into channels from a hundred and thirty to three hundred and thirty feet in width. Sometimes the trees on both banks meet overhead, forming a green canopy. The foliage is not of the monotonous dark green hue which characterises the Ubangi and Congo forests, but varies from the light green tints of spring to the red-brown colourings of autumn. Numerous rocks and reefs embellish the landscape, but are dangerous to navigation.

My crew was composed of Bakangos, a tribe which inhabits the banks of the Uelle between Bondo and Bambili. They are less attractive than the Asandes, being dirtier and more uncivilised, but they are competent boatmen, and also extremely musical. I distinguished no fewer than six different tunes, all of them so melodious that I often interrupted my reading in order to listen to the singers.

On the third day of the voyage we encountered several rapids. The men rowed vigorously on, but the strength of the current was too much for them, and the two men in the bows could no longer make headway against the stream. The boat swung round just as a huge wave broke over it, and a few cowards sprang into the water. I crept out from under my awning, so that if the boat capsized I might not be drowned like a rat in a trap. However, by exerting all their might, the rowers succeeded in bringing the half-swamped boat to the shore, a feat of which my Ubangi boatmen would have been incapable.

On the 30th of May at noon, we reached Angu. This little European station is built close to the river bank, in a clearance in the midst of the great forest. The straw and mud huts were not such as to inspire great confidence, and it seemed to me more than doubtful whether they would suffice to keep out the rain during the wet season which was just beginning. The "chef de poste" was absent, and a black sergeant was left in charge of the station.

I explained the object of my journey to the soldiers, and told them that I was most anxious to shoot an okapi, but that I also wanted specimens of all the other animals of the forest, great and small, and that I was prepared to pay a large reward to anyone who brought them to me. I was rejoiced to hear that the okapi is a well-known denizen of the forest; the men at once recognised Boyd Alexander's photographs of the animal, and mentioned its local name: *ndumbe*. Two days later a tall, slim negro called Etumbamingi (literally: the quarrelsome one), offered his services; he was the young chief of a neighbouring village, and claimed to be an experienced okapi

hunter. In proof of his assertion he showed me a large basket with handles, made from the skin of an okapi and an elephant. I explained that I was determined to secure an okapi, and that I would give him a gun, some powder, percussion caps, and other beautiful things if he would bring me within range of one of these animals. He replied that he knew where okapis were to be found, and would do his best, but that this kind of hunting was an arduous undertaking, quite unsuited to white men. He described how the okapi wanders continually through the forest, and must be pursued for days on end, over swamps and through dense jungle, and he insisted that Europeans made too much noise. They could shoot elephants and buffaloes, which are stupid and easily duped, but not the shy and wary *ndumbe* that always lives far away from human dwellings. In short, he wished to dispense with my company.

The young man inspired me with confidence, and with all that he told me I was already familiar since the time when we had unsuccessfully hunted okapis with the dwarfs of the Ituri forest during our first expedition. But I was not prepared to give up so easily my great desire to be the first European to shoot this rare animal. If Etumbamingi could not help me to accomplish my wish, then I must find another guide. So I dismissed him with the injunction to hunt on his own account, and to send me word as soon as he came across any okapis.

A few days after my arrival in Angu, the "chef de poste," Monsieur Andersson, came home. He was formerly a sub-officer in the Swedish field artillery, and then "agent militaire" in the service of the Belgian Congo Government. He was ready to meet all my

wishes, and immediately took steps to facilitate my hunting. According to him the okapi was not such a rare sight in the neighbourhood of Angu. But its habit of having no permanent abode, and of going about alone excepting during the breeding season, seriously increased the difficulties of hunting it. He was of opinion that a clever hunter should be able to find one in less than a week, but he thought I had very little chance of gratifying my ambition to study the animal's mode of life or to shoot a specimen myself. Owing to the dense foliage of the jungle, it was necessary to approach within a short distance of the animal, and this no white man could accomplish in the case of the wary okapi. Consequently he was convinced that chance alone could bring one of these creatures within range of a European.

In spite of this discouraging opinion, I could not bring myself to give up my long cherished wish. It took numerous, very fatiguing hunting expeditions, in the company of an experienced native hunter named Koki, to bring me round to Andersson's point of view. The latter had once seen a living okapi, a young animal, whose photograph appeared in several European newspapers in the year 1908. The natives had caught it after shooting its mother, and it had lived for two or three days in Angu. From his observations of this specimen, Andersson stated that the gait of an okapi is an amble resembling that of a giraffe.

As my headquarters Andersson recommended a small village belonging to the chief Koloka, two days' march south of Angu, and he kindly offered to accompany me and introduce me to the chief. We arrived at Koloka's residence on the 8th of June. The inhabitants of the village are Mobattis, a tribe

belonging to the large Ababua family, and they are almost exclusively hunters, possessing only a few banana and manioc plantations. As in the case of the Asandes, the women here do all the work both in the fields and in the village. The men spend the whole day resting on wooden couches, smoking huge pipes filled with bad tobacco or hemp, and imbibing large quantities of a kind of immature wine made from bananas. But for their "meat hunger" and the *Bula matadi* (this is the universal native name throughout the whole of Central Africa for the Belgian Congo government), these happy Congo negroes would spend their whole lives on their couches, in "dolce far niente." But they are great meat eaters; cannibalism is strictly forbidden, and a few dogs and fowls, which constitute their only domestic animals, are not enough to satisfy their hunger. So now and again they go hunting.

The Belgian Government provides another troublesome occupation for them. Four times a year the authorities collect the taxes, which until recently were paid in the form of indiarubber. Every full-grown man was obliged to deliver two pounds each month. In the course of time indiarubber has become much less plentiful in the forest, and in order to satisfy these demands, the natives have to go long distances in search of it. Monsieur Andersson informed me that it takes the negroes three months out of every year to collect the equivalent of their taxes. This sounds like oppression, but in reality it is only a wholesome inducement to work.

The Government pays one franc in kind for every kilo of indiarubber that is brought in, and receives in the market at Antwerp approximately fifteen

francs per kilo. The small station of Angu produces every year twenty-five tons of indiarubber, and five tons of ivory, which represents a value of about 450,000 francs. Andersson estimated the total expenses including the salaries of the officials, upkeep of the station, carriage, etc., at about 15,000 francs per annum. So that this tiny station alone brings in to the Belgian Government an annual revenue of 435,000 francs.

Zobia, the principal station in the Uelle district, produces about a hundred and twenty tons of indiarubber per annum. The revenue from the whole Uelle district is estimated at five million francs per annum, and since the Belgian Congo comprises fourteen districts, the immense value of this colony is evident.

My host Koloka had a somewhat foolish appearance. He wore a second-hand European suit of clothes and hat, and his great, round eyes expressed good humour, nervousness, and apprehension as they rolled restlessly to and fro. Andersson had instructed him to minister to all my wants, and as a result, Koloka would not let me walk a single step without running after me; this often became very troublesome when I was out hunting. On the day of our arrival several neighbouring chiefs happened to be visiting Koloka, and with Andersson's assistance I explained my wishes to them. I wanted specimens of all the animal denizens of the jungle, but above all a *ndumbe* and a *bangana* or *Booceros euryceros*, which is the name of another huge forest antelope, almost as rare as the okapi. I promised to pay in cloth, salt, knives, and mirrors for the commoner animals, in powder and percussion caps for rarer specimens, and with a rifle for an okapi or a *bangana*. After

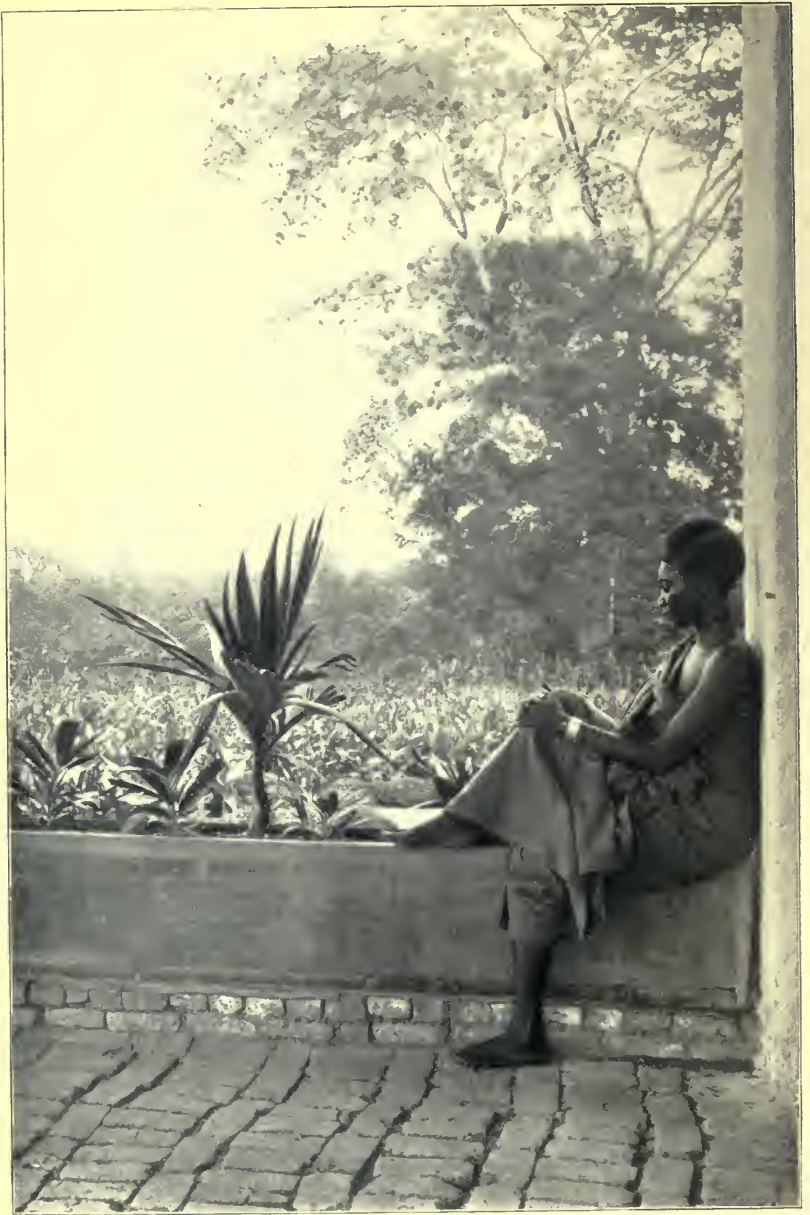
thus setting everything in train for me, Andersson returned the following morning to his post.

During the fortnight that I spent in this forest village I collected more than a hundred specimens of mammalia. Very rare and remarkable animals were brought to me, amongst them many that I had vainly endeavoured to secure during my first Congo travels: charming little tufted antelopes that never leave the semi-darkness of the jungle, long-tailed armadillos with pointed snouts, that walk on their tarsal bones instead of on their toes, four different kinds of squirrels, one of which possesses powerful wing-membranes between its four legs, serving as a kind of parachute when it leaps from tree to tree. (Illus. 5.) There were rats, too, as large as cats, each with a white stomach, a white tail, and a huge moustache; shrew-mice as large as guinea-pigs, not at all savage, and with large, gentle, brown eyes; seven different species of monkeys of all colours and sizes; two night monkeys, with eyes that shone in the dark like phosphorus; porcupines, not the common East African type, but the rare jungle variety (*Atherura*) with long tails and so many different kinds of hairs, bristles, quills, and scales that every possible hairy appendage seemed to be represented in their coats. I obtained all the above animals and many more besides.

But I still had no okapi, and my chances of obtaining one seemed very slender. Soon after my arrival in Koloka's village, the former Congo soldier Koki, whom I have already mentioned, came from Bondo to help me in my hunting expedition. He was strongly recommended to me as a first-rate hunter by Commandant Bareau, and he had arranged to accompany me from Bondo. But the day before my departure his



11. At the station of Bambili on the Uelle.



12. Matalani.

wife, as she was fetching water from the Uelle, was seized by a crocodile, drowned, and presumably eaten. Fortunately Koki possessed four wives, so that the loss was not so great as it would otherwise have been, but he spent several days in a vain search for her body. He was a model of strength and intelligence, and from early morning until late evening he roamed with me all over the country surrounding Koloka.

The forest which is the home of the okapi, unlike many other parts of the equatorial jungle, is almost pathless. Elephant and buffalo tracks provide the only possible means of deviating from the narrow native foot-paths which connect the isolated villages, and of penetrating into the jungle itself. Fallen tree-trunks, dense underwood with large leaves, thorns, lianas, swamps, and swollen torrents present endless obstacles. The explorer must bore his way onwards, climbing, crawling, and often wading neck-deep in water, and all this in a sultry heat which makes him perspire from every pore, amid a dank, poisonous exhalation rising from the ground, and the depressing influence of the monotonous, evergreen foliage. Far-reaching modern rifles, and powerful field-glasses are quite useless here. In order to see the game it is necessary to come within ten or twenty yards of it, and at this distance the strong Mobatti lance or the percussion gun of the natives, the "fusil à piston," is quite as effective. I grew more and more hopeless, and at last came to the melancholy conclusion that so far as shooting an okapi was concerned, I was doomed to disappointment.

My health had suffered from the cold, damp nights spent in my thin-walled tent, from the dense fogs which seldom dispersed before midday, and from the

incessant rain, which had converted the jungle, damp as it is even during the dry season, into one continuous swamp. All these hardships told on my constitution, already undermined by the fatigues of travelling. A chill finally brought on fever, and obliged me to spend several days in bed.

So, like all my predecessors, I was obliged to fall back upon the skill of the native hunters. So far, however, they had not succeeded in killing an okapi, and evening after evening they returned empty-handed to camp. They pretended that the indiarubber hunters had frightened away the okapis, or else that they had themselves shot one but that it had got away. Their powder was finished and I must supply them with more. Powder was their one desire, just as an okapi was mine.

At last one evening, as I sat in front of my tent after spending the day in bed, a breathless messenger announced that Etumbamingi had shot an okapi.

“Is it really dead?” I asked, accustomed as I was to being told that it had escaped after having been wounded.

I was assured that it was quite dead, and that it was lying in the thickest part of the jungle, four hours' journey from my camp. I roused my men and explained to them how important it was to secure the skin and skeleton in good condition, and sent them off the same evening to the place where the dead animal lay. In spite of my weak state, I endeavoured the following morning to get there myself, but on the way I fell in with the bearers bringing the skin and skeleton back to camp.

Scarcely was the preservation of the okapi skin completed (illus. 6) when the neighbouring Asande chief,

Mussumba, sent me a specimen of a *bangana*, another species of large-striped antelope. It was not full-grown, but was a one year old animal with a beautiful coat, about the size of a fallow deer. I remained in Koloka hoping that I might secure a second example of one or other of these rare creatures, but an alarming incident obliged me to cut short my zoological work.

One evening a messenger came running from Angu. He had accomplished the thirty miles in one day, and had been sent by the black sergeant to tell me that Andersson was lying seriously ill, and that in his delirium he had been shooting at his "boys." The news alarmed me very much; Andersson had boasted to me that he was so thoroughly acclimatised to Africa that he was immune to fever and did not need to take quinine regularly. And yet now, but a fortnight later, he was lying seriously ill. I sent hurriedly for bearers, and the following morning set off at full speed. I was feeling too weak to walk the whole distance in one day, so my deck-chair was fastened to two strong poles, and was carried by twelve men, who were changed at intervals. At five o'clock in the evening, feverish and exhausted by the long and uncomfortable journey, I reached Angu. All the time I had been wondering whether Andersson would recognise me, or whether he might not possibly shoot me with his revolver.

An hour before arriving in Angu I met a European ivory dealer who had pitched his tent in the middle of the path. As is usual in the Congo, I addressed him in French. He mumbled his name, and asked me whether I spoke English. I replied in the affirmative, and we chatted for a few minutes about the difficulties of travelling, and then he informed me that Andersson was still alive, but seriously ill, and

“somewhat foolish.” He had passed through Angu that morning but had not troubled to visit the sick man. There are such people even in Africa! Two days later I came across his papers in Angu, and discovered that the fellow was a German. He had not said a word when I told him that I was a “member of the Duke of Mecklenberg’s expedition,” and had persisted in his statement that he was an Englishman. Presumably he had his own private reasons for concealing his nationality.

Andersson seemed to have passed safely through the dangerous crisis, but still appeared to be very ill. He was much troubled by what he had done, and I had great difficulty in persuading him that he was not responsible for his actions when delirious. I did my best to restore him to health, both mental and physical, but it was a hard task. His solitary life in Angu (I was the first white man whom he had seen in seven months, and the second in a whole year), and his troubles with his subordinates had embittered him, rendering him suspicious and irritable, whilst his powers of resistance had been weakened by the wretched food and sleeplessness, the latter being a common trouble in Africa. I saw at once that I could not leave Angu without endangering his life, until a man should be sent to supersede him. I wrote to the “chef de zone” in Buta explaining the situation, and a week later Andersson’s successor had arrived.

My efforts to add to my zoological collection fortunately met with considerable success. I sent the natives hunting within a radius of about twenty miles of Angu, and it was the indefatigable Etumbamingi who realised my ambition to secure a second okapi and a second *bangana*. One day, when I had more

or less shaken off my attack of fever, news was brought that this clever hunter had shot a bangana, and at midnight twelve sturdy natives carried it into the station. A few days later the second okapi was secured.

It was near sunrise, and the rain was falling in torrents. The exciting news that Etumbamingi had killed an okapi brought me hurriedly out of bed, but I did not feel very sanguine of being able to see and photograph the animal, for the sky was black and menacing, and the morning was almost as dark as a November day at home. The roads were ankle-deep in mud, and the swampy jungle was well-nigh impassable. I was still very weak, but the joy and excitement of securing this new prize sustained me.

Andersson despatched four soldiers and twenty bearers, with strict orders to convey the okapi to the nearest village, and as soon as the rain had stopped I hastened thither to take the coveted photographs. Unfortunately it did not cease raining until the afternoon, and the sun was already setting when I arrived. There was no sign of the okapi, and no sound of approaching bearers; I hurriedly sought a guide, and at last found a young man who professed to know his way through the bush. But our advance was hindered by swamps and briars, and I soon realised the futility of proceeding any further. Twilight was rapidly descending upon the forest, and there was scarcely enough light even now for taking a photograph. So I decided to wait in an abandoned banana plantation, and sent the natives in search of the okapi, with instructions to urge on the bearers to their utmost speed. If they were not on the spot within half an hour, all my efforts would have been in vain. The

minutes passed all too quickly. It was half past five, and by six o'clock the daylight would have disappeared entirely. At length I heard in the distance the sound of shouting, scolding negro voices, which must surely herald the approach of the okapi.

I could scarcely contain my impatience, but at last the head of the advancing procession came into view. An animal, about the size and weight of a horse, was suspended by the legs from a young tree, carried at each end by fifteen staggering, panting negroes, urged on by scolding soldiers. The dead okapi formed a striking picture, with its powerful dark-brown body, the disproportionately long neck, the black donkey's ears above the grey face with its long protruding tongue, the large, dark, staring eyes, and the beautiful, slender, black and white striped legs. With all possible speed I made several time exposures in various positions, so that notwithstanding the semi-darkness, I might be sure of having at least one successful photograph. From a photograph (illus. 7) Heims painted the picture of the living okapi which adorns the cover of Volume II., and this is the first time that the gait peculiar to this animal has ever been depicted. The other specimen of the *Ocapia johnstoni* was stuffed, and can be seen in the Frankfort-on-Main museum. (Illus. 8.)

My last days in Angu were devoted to drying, labelling, and packing the specimens that I had collected. It was a pleasant change to meet a party of Europeans, who were travelling down the Uelle on their way home. I felt particularly attracted towards a young Belgian officer, named Captain de Labarre. We spent a very agreeable evening together, and it was a great pleasure to be once more



13. Ababua man.



14. Abarambo woman.



15. Mangbatu village with oil palms.



16. Mangbatu with plaited beard.

in the company of an educated man. When we said good-bye the following morning, we expressed the hope of meeting again some day either in Brussels or in Berlin. But unfortunately this was not to be. A few days later during the final stage of the voyage from Likati, de Labarre was pushed overboard by his boatmen, and drowned together with his "boys." Events of this kind forcibly impress upon one's mind the fact that travelling in this country is after all not as safe as it is at home! Poor de Labarre! In another five days he would have been on board the steamer, and he was looking forward so joyfully to his return to civilisation.

A week later another traveller visited Angu: Monsieur de Calonne-Beaufaict, the chief engineer of the railway which is being constructed between Buta and Bambili. My first impression of him was not very favourable. He was dressed in a worn-out hunting coat and an exceedingly shabby hat; his beard was long and shaggy, and had evidently not been trimmed for many years. He seemed to me to be one of those men who think that here among the savages they must live like savages, and he reminded me of the elephant hunter, Coquelin. But I soon found that I had to do with an exceedingly clever, well-educated and cultivated individual, who had come to Africa not because he could not find work in Europe or for any other unsatisfactory reason, but because he was genuinely interested in this country. The explanation of his somewhat neglected appearance was simply that he had been far away from civilisation for two years and a half, and was still suffering from the effects of an attack of blackwater fever.

His speciality was the ethnology and sociology of

the country. His excellent books dealing with the Ababuas and Bakangos prove that he possessed to a high degree the gift of mastering the native languages, and of acquiring the confidence of the aborigines. Calonne intended to leave Angu the day after his arrival, but he remained three days, and we sat up till after midnight, an unusually late hour in Africa, enjoying the most absorbingly interesting conversations.

My baggage was so much increased by my large zoological collection that it was impossible to procure enough bearers to take it all with me. I therefore entrusted a great part of it to Andersson's successor, begging him to despatch it by land to Likati, and thence by boat to Ibembo. Here it would be picked up by a steamer belonging to the German Company that had undertaken the transport of all the baggage of our expedition. This route therefore appeared to me to be the safest as well as the shortest. Great was my consternation when in January of this year (1912) I learned that this valuable collection was lost. Although I had paid in advance the carriage by land as far as Likati, the cases had been sent by water, and the boat had been swamped in a whirlpool between Angu and Bondo. All the contents had fallen into the river, and out of the few cases which were recovered, most of them arrived with their contents utterly ruined. But by great good fortune the two okapi skeletons were among the things that were saved, and they are now in the Frankfort and Hamburg zoological museums.

CHAPTER XVII

THE MANGBETTU COUNTRY

WHEN I left Angu the greater part of my zoological work was accomplished, for I had enriched my collection by a great many scientifically valuable specimens of the fauna of the district which up to the present was not represented in any German zoological museum. But before turning my steps towards home, there were still two matters in the Uelle district that I wished to investigate; first the Association for taming and breaking in elephants, and second the Mangbettu people.

I was obliged to go a little out of my way in order to reach the headquarters of the Association at Api on the Uere River, a northern tributary of the Uelle.

Accompanied by native guides, I marched along the northern bank of the Uelle from Angu to Api. The station of Api resembles a large country house, and its situation and development reflect great credit on the builder, Commandant Laplume. The latter is one of the oldest Congo officials, and is at the head of the Association, with a lieutenant and a practical farmer as his subordinates.

There are about thirty elephants, all of them young animals from five to eight feet in height, in a large yard containing sheds and surrounded by a high stockade. At night and during the hottest part of the

day they remain in the yard, but the rest of their time is spent in the pasture land round the station, in charge of native attendants. At sunset, after a refreshing bath in the neighbouring river, they are brought back to the sheds. (Illus. 9). In the absence of the Commandant, the officer in charge of the station declined to allow me to witness the capture of wild elephants, which is effected in the following manner :—

A dozen trained natives, known as *cornacs*, four of them armed with rifles, and the remainder carrying strong ropes and nooses, approach as near as possible to a herd of elephants which is known to include some cows with their calves. Yelling and shouting they rush upon the herd, causing the animals to disperse in terror. Those of the men that are provided with ropes then pursue a previously selected calf, and seizing it by the trunk, ears, and tail, they further secure it by means of nooses round its neck, body, and hind-legs.

Meanwhile the men armed with rifles fire them off into the air, so as to frighten away the rest of the herd, and may even be obliged to kill the mother elephant, should she return on hearing the pitiful cries of her offspring, and refuse to be driven away. It is no easy matter to drag the captive back to camp; it naturally resists with all its might, and some of the men pull it along by the neck, while others belabour it from behind. Sometimes, in a rage, it endeavours to attack the foremost hunters, but those behind restrain it by means of the nooses. Fatal accidents are very rare, though the hunters often receive wounds. This does not deter the brave and warlike Asandes, from whom the *cornacs* are recruited; they apparently enjoy the excitement of their dangerous calling, and whereas they formerly confined their attention to



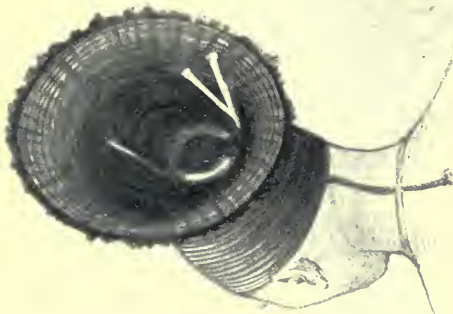
17. Mangbatu in bark aprons.



18. Mangbatu woman and child, with cords about the forehead and upper part of skull.



*Manki the keni
Togel
Heim*



*Manki the keni
Togel
Heim*

the smallest calves, they now capture larger elephants, up to five feet in height.

On its arrival in camp the captive is placed in a temporary kraal made of large tree trunks, and divided into several compartments, one for each elephant. As soon as six or more have been caught, they are removed to Api, where they are given in charge of tame elephants. Those that have been the longest in captivity take care of the new arrivals in the most touching manner, protecting them from molestation by their companions, and endeavouring to console them for the loss of their liberty. Within six weeks the new arrivals are so far tamed that they are allowed to accompany their seniors to pasture.

It is surprising how few elephants are lost from the station, considering the liberty they enjoy. It is very seldom that an animal is missing, but on the other hand it occasionally happens that some trivial occurrence, such as the crash of a falling tree, the sudden appearance of a monkey, or even the fall of a large fruit, will cause the whole herd to lose their heads and stampede. In this case it often takes weeks to recover the scattered animals. There are also many losses due to death from digestive troubles and other obscure maladies, so that the herd grows very slowly, and numbers only some thirty odd, although the undertaking has been on foot for more than ten years.

The elephants that have been some time in captivity are trained to work; they are harnessed to carts, and fetch all the building materials required on the station. I went for a drive in a cart drawn by a team of elephants; they worked willingly, and obeyed the least sign of the *cornacs* sitting on their backs, but as they constantly nibbled by the wayside, snatching here and there a

handful of grass or the branch of a tree, the pace was not very rapid. They are also used for ploughing, but they are of no great practical utility for serious work. (Illus. 10.)

The prospects of this undertaking at Api are not on the whole very promising. It has indeed been conclusively proved that it is possible to tame and train the African elephant, but the practical results are almost nil, and seem scarcely to justify the expense of over a million francs that has been incurred. I very much doubt whether elephants will ever be made as useful in Africa as they are in India, for it must be borne in mind that the Indian roads are very superior to the African, most of them being adapted for motor traffic, whereas in the interior of Africa there is scarcely a bridge passable for a horse, much less for an elephant.

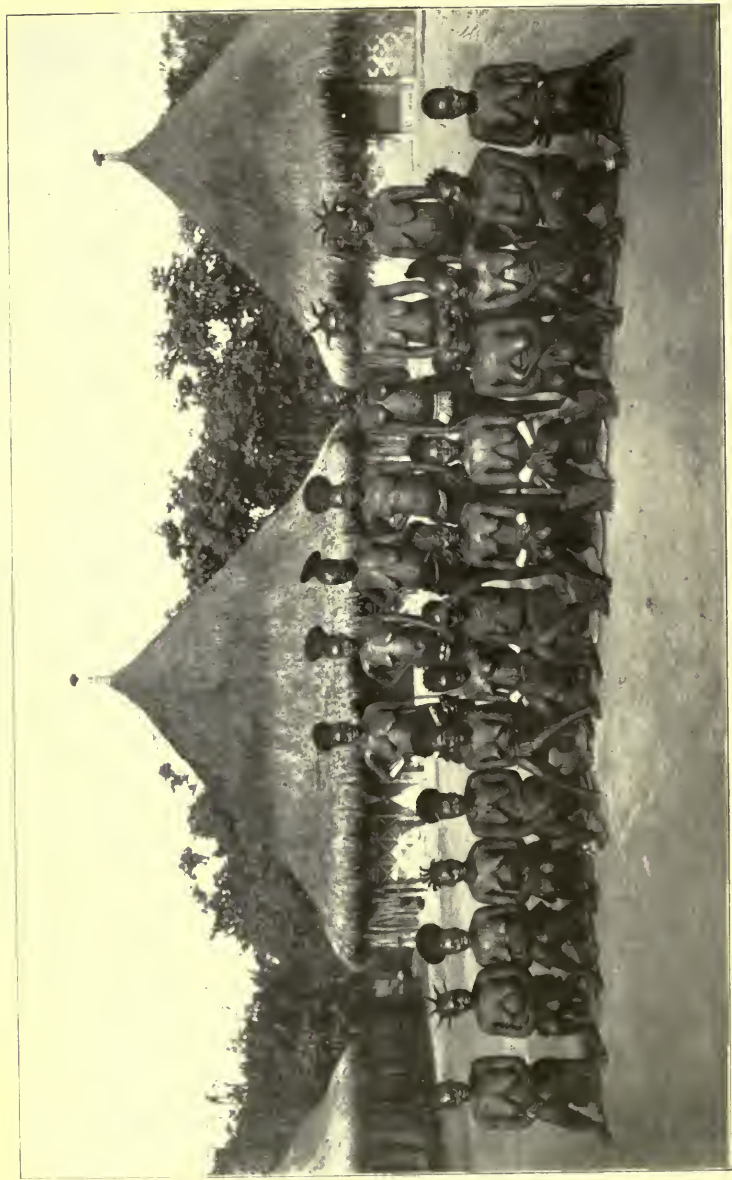
An accidental meeting with Commandant Bareau, my kind host in Bondo, was a pleasant surprise for me one day during my stay in Api. He had been appointed "Chef de la zone de Gourba-Dungu," and was on his way to his new residence, so as I intended journeying to the Mangbettu country without making any prolonged halt, we were able to travel part of the way together. The Commandant was accompanied by a large caravan which comprised a number of living creatures besides his baggage, namely, his three "boys" and their wives, two mulatto babies, whose parents were dead, a horse, a mule, a handsome collie, some monkeys, and a basket full of ducks. The strangest member of the party was a pig, which was so fond of the mule that he kept beside it day and night. When the Commandant rode his mule, the pig galloped merrily along at his side, bravely swimming the rivers,



21. Mangbatu children: the girl with deformed skull.



22. Mangbatu maiden at her toilet.



23. Wives of the Mangbatu Fuler, Okondo.

and showing his pleasure at meeting his big friend on the other bank by rubbing his snout against its heels. This the mule did not resent, although as a rule it was ill-tempered and given to kicking. But the long journey was too much for the poor pig's legs, and shortly before his master reached Dungu the dear, faithful creature, which had so often entertained us by his antics, died of exhaustion.

The Mangbettus are famous throughout the Congo for their intelligence, their physical beauty, their skill in making all kinds of implements, as well as for their wonderfully good taste, and they have attained in the Congo basin a position similar to that held by the French in Europe during the seventeenth century.

Bareau advised me to pay a visit to Sultan Okondo, the greatest of the Mangbettu chiefs, whose residence was in the neighbourhood of Niangara.

Bambili is the largest station on the Uelle, and it was here that I first made acquaintance with the Mangbettus. Amongst a crowd of women dancing to the sound of a concertina, the graceful movements of a girl attracted my attention, and in reply to my questions, I was informed that her name was Matalani, and that she was a Mangbettu maiden.

Matalani proved to be a princess of the blood. Her father was the chief Denge, living between Niangara and Dungu, and her mother was the daughter of Munza, a powerful Mangbettu king. The natural grace of her carriage, her beautiful little hands and feet, and her intelligent face, betrayed her noble birth. She was civilized, that is to say, she wore a dark blue cotton toga, in place of the short skirt worn by Mangbettu women. Her hair was carefully dressed, and

her head was elongated, owing to its having been artificially deformed in her childhood, according to the Mangbettu custom. Her only ornaments were a pair of bracelets, made of white metal and the tail hairs of an elephant, and they showed to advantage her slender wrists and the bronze colouring of her satin skin. A handful of cigarettes secured her friendship, and she willingly allowed me to photograph her. (Illus. 12.)

Unfortunately Commandant Bareau was obliged to leave Bambili the day after our arrival, without allowing himself so much as a day's rest. The former "Chef de zone" of Gurba-Dungu had been murdered, and the presence of his energetic successor was urgently needed. His bearers had been awaiting him for some time, but mine would not be forthcoming for two or three days, so that the Commandant and I were obliged here to part company.

The large Ababua tribe inhabits both banks of the Bima River south of the Uelle and the Bomokandi. My new bearers were of this people: powerful, savage-looking men, whose principal adornment, apart from extensive tattooing, consisted in numerous brass or iron rings drawn through the lobes of their ears. (Illus. 13.)

With these men I travelled to Amadi and Surango, two small stations on the Uelle. The country further south is inhabited by the Amadis and Abarambos (illus. 14), two small but warlike tribes, which before the advent of the Europeans, were constantly at war with their more powerful neighbours, the Mangbettus.

I came across the first Mangbettu villages between Surango and Niangara; they are much more numerous south of Niangara, and extend far into the great

primeval forest, as far as the Nepoko and the Ituri-Aruwimi.

Niangara is the largest Belgian station in the Mangbettu district. It is the residence of a "Chef de zone," and possesses a tribunal composed of three judges. Formerly it was the seat of the Chief of the Uelle district, who lived in a large, castellated house. In front of it is an obelisk bearing the name "Chaltin," the victor of Redjaf, and two bronze cannons with a heap of cannon-balls bear witness to the famous victory of the Belgian troops over the Dervishes.

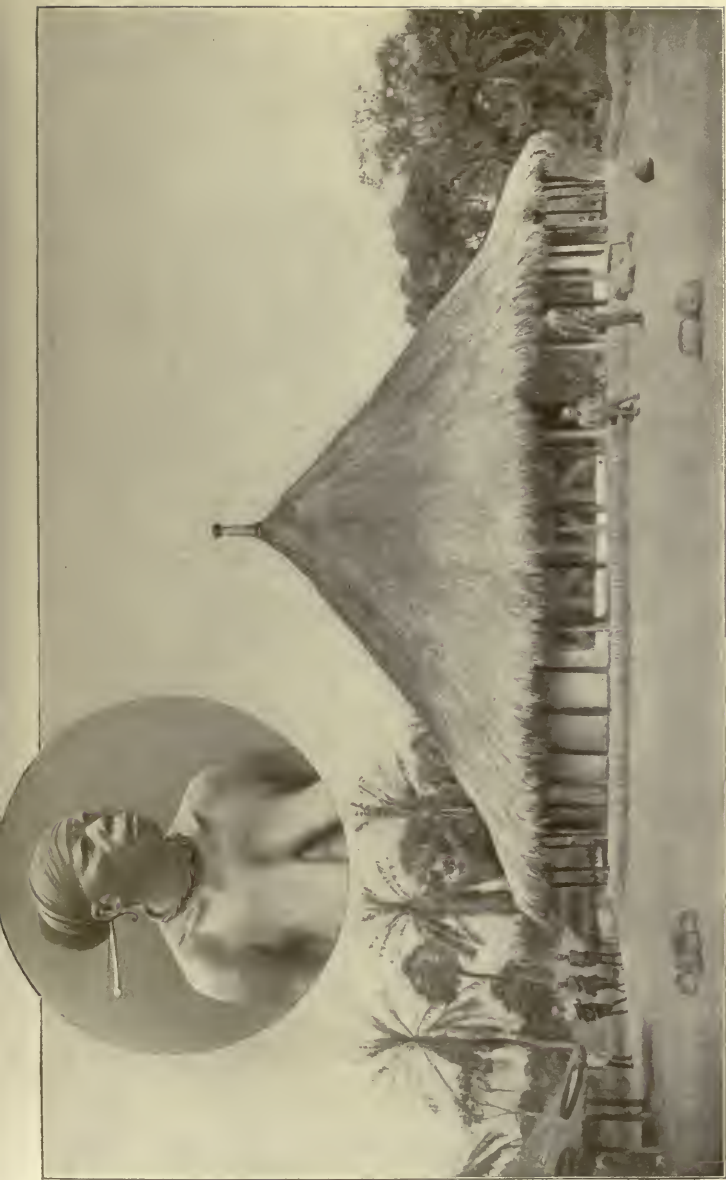
The "Chef de zone" agreed with me as to the advisability of my spending a week or two as the guest of Sultan Okondo, in order to study the manners and customs of the Mangbettu people. The morning after my arrival I set out for the village of this great Mangbettu chief, which is only four or five hours' march from Niangara. The road leads through a wide savannah as far as the wooded banks of the Gada River, and then it winds between numerous Mangbettu huts, in a densely populated country. The natives greeted the white travellers in a friendly and respectful manner, but without servility.

The weather was perfect, and the heat much less oppressive. It was afternoon, so that the sun's rays were no longer perpendicular, and they tinged the broad banana leaves with gold, and the rivulets with silver, imparting at the same time a rosy hue to the cone-shaped roofs of the Mangbettu huts. As I rode briskly along on my white pony, I called to mind the names of all the famous explorers who had travelled this way before me: Schweinfurth, Junker, Emin Pasha, and Casati. I was familiar with all the descriptions of their experiences, but none had made so vivid an

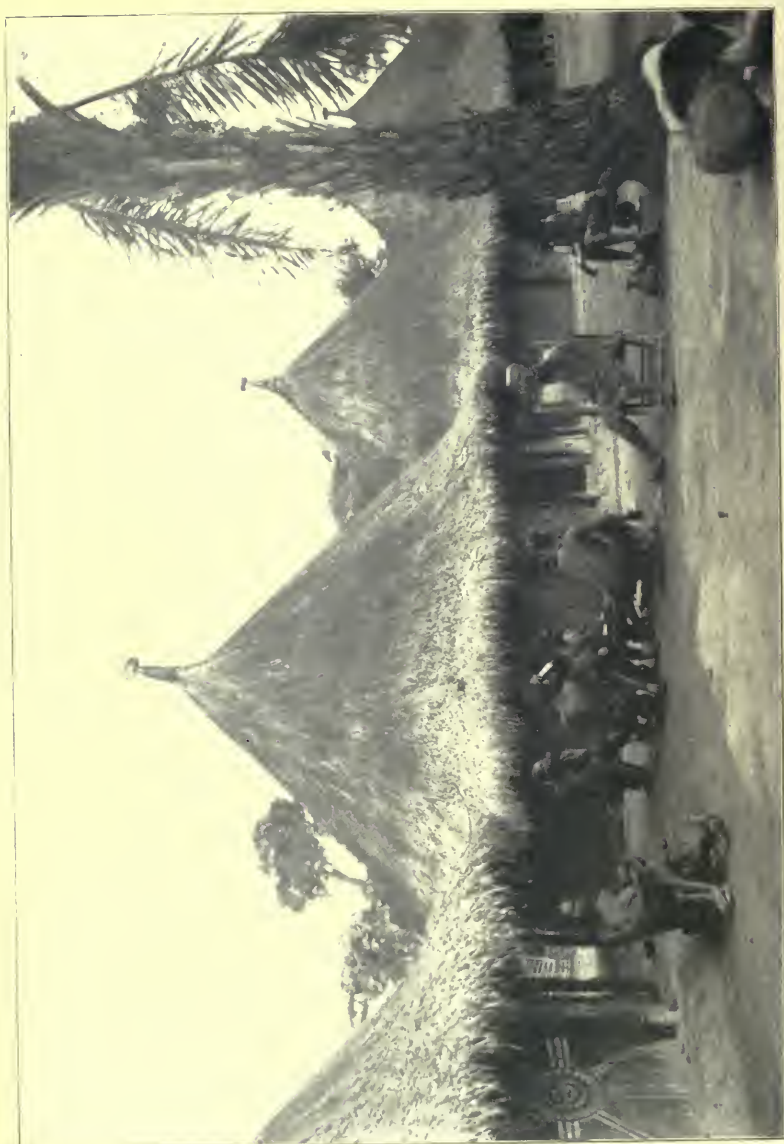
impression on my mind as Schweinfurth's inspiring narrative of his visit to King Munza. I wondered whether my experiences would prove equally interesting, or whether advancing civilization would have combined with European tutelage to deprive the Mangbettu people of their charm.

I heard in the distance the deep tones of a mighty gong, mingling with those of drums and various wind instruments, as well as the singing of hundreds of voices. A messenger brought word that Okondo was preparing a magnificent reception in my honour, so I spurred on my mule to its utmost speed. After crossing the last stream, I left the forest behind me, and came to a large open plateau, about a third of a mile in width. Numerous Mangbettu huts were built round its circumference, while on the north side was Okondo's palace, surrounded by a high stockade. In the middle of the plateau I saw a very remarkable building, facing east and west, open on all sides, and about the size of an average railway station. This was the great Mangbettu Assembly Hall or *bassa*, graphically described by Schweinfurth as the scene of his reception by Munza. The whole broad space in front of Okondo's palace was literally black with people, and thousands of men, women, and children were dancing with manifest enthusiasm. The sultan, surrounded by his ministers and his four favourite wives, emerged from the throng, and came forward to greet me.

Okondo himself was not in keeping with the rest of the picture. He is a tall man in the prime of life, with an intelligent face framed by a heavy, black beard, but showing traces of alcoholic excess. He was badly dressed in European clothes, with lace boots



24. Nenzima, Munza's sister. 25. Nenzima's house.



and leather gaiters, drill trousers that had once been white, and a blue shirt. His head was covered with an ugly English cap. He welcomed me politely, and invited me to take up my abode inside his zariba, a large, scrupulously clean hut being assigned to me.

I spent ten days as Okondo's guest, and busied myself from morning till night investigating the manners and customs of the Mangbettu people, and collecting facts concerning their history. I found that their habits had considerably altered since Schweinfurth's time, not altogether for the better.

It is very fortunate that such an accurate observer as George Schweinfurth should have visited this exceptionally interesting and peculiar tribe just before the beginning of a new epoch in its existence.

In April 1870 Schweinfurth was the guest of King Munza, whose residence was built on almost the same site as that of Okondo at the present time. The kingdom was broken up on the death of Munza in 1871, and he was the last of the great Mangbettu kings, who have now become almost legendary, and whose character and royal household were so ably portrayed by Schweinfurth. This typical African despot, who combined great personal dignity with well-nigh incredible cruelty, lost his life in a fight with some ivory and slave traders from Khartoum. A civil war broke out after Munza's death, and was fostered by the Egyptian Government. Munza's dynasty became extinct in the male line, and his kingdom was broken up into several small principalities governed by Abangba princes.

The Mangbettu country comprises not more than 250 square miles, but it is more densely populated

than any other part of the Continent. Most of the villages contain over a hundred huts, and the estimate of four thousand inhabitants to the square mile is probably not excessive. This would give a population of nearly a million.

Everyone who visits the Mangbettu country agrees in describing it as an earthly Paradise. It is about three thousand feet above the sea level, and many swiftly flowing streams rise in the hills and pour their water into the three great rivers: the Uelle, the Bomokandi, and the Aruwimi. The vegetation is everywhere luxuriant, and in the neighbourhood of the rivers the soil is particularly fertile. The Mangbettus are agriculturalists only in a comparatively restricted sense, for the natural fertility of the ground causes the crops to grow almost of their own accord. Bananas constitute their chief food, also manioc, yams, and ground nuts, with luxuries such as sugar-cane and tobacco.

In all the villages in Equatorial Africa there grows a tree the *Urostigma kotschyana*, which is greatly valued by the natives on account of its bark, which after having been softened by beating, is made into a durable, woolly material. Cheap cotton stuffs made in Germany, have been imported by the Mangbettus during the last thirty years, but to a much smaller extent than among other tribes. Loin cloths of cotton, which are to be seen almost everywhere in Central Africa, even amongst the poorest tribes, are here despised by the very commonest men. Their good taste in preferring their own durable bark material to the usual coarse German stuffs speaks well for the culture of the Mangbettus.

Cattle, goats, and pigs are scarce in this country

on account of the numerous tsetse flies, but there are a great many dogs and fowls. The natives obtain most of their meat by hunting, and the elephants, buffaloes, hogs, and innumerable varieties of antelopes provide an almost inexhaustible supply of food.

In former times the Mangbettus were continually fighting with the neighbouring Monvu tribes, and their booty consisted not only of domestic animals, but also of the dead bodies of their enemies and of captured women and children, with which they satisfied their cannibal instincts. Schweinfurth alludes to their lust for human flesh, which in his opinion is unsurpassed by that of any other African people. The strict government of the Congo State has put down this horrible practice, for the Belgians punish with death any native convicted of cannibalism.

At the present day hunting is the principal occupation of the men, and the women do all the work of the houses and fields. The women of the upper classes leave the hard work to the household slaves, and busy themselves with cooking and with their personal toilet, which takes up a great deal more time than their scanty attire would lead one to suppose.

The Mangbettus are a tall race, and their bodies are well proportioned, and for the most part slim and muscular; it is only in old age or in the case of a particularly lazy individual that they become stout. Their skin is of a light coffee colour, several shades lighter than that of the neighbouring Asande and Monvu people. Their skulls are markedly dolichocephalic, and their faces are distinguished from those of other negro races by their long, hooked noses, which in many cases, give them a Semitic appearance. They grow heavier beards than most negroes (illus. 16),

regarding them as a sign of manliness, and sometimes they wear them in plaits.

The men's dress consists of a wide skirt made from bark. The latter is soaked for a long time in water, and then vigorously hammered with a wooden mallet until it resembles a thick and very supple woven material. The separate strips are joined by means of india-rubber, which is fairly plentiful in the forest, instead of being sewn as is the custom among the inhabitants of Uganda, who wear this same material. On their heads the Mangbettus wear very pretty square hats made of finely plaited grass, and usually dyed red and black. Most of them are adorned with tufts of feathers, the favourites being the red tail feathers of the grey parrot or the plumage of the guinea-fowl. The men are never tattooed; the women, on the other hand, tattoo themselves all over. The men despise this kind of adornment, and it is only on rare occasions that they rub into their skin a mixture of palm oil and red dye.

The women's dress consists of a narrow, dark-brown strip of the same bark material, covering them in front, but leaving their backs bare, and fastened round the waist with a thin cord. A little apron made of dried banana leaves hangs from this cord, and is known as the *legbe*. It is often richly ornamented, and decorated in various ways. The better class women wear cuffs of spirally wound copper wire, as well as bead necklaces and bracelets. But their chief characteristic is their very striking coiffure, which is begun in infancy.

The curious custom prevails among the Mangbettus of lengthening the skull by means of a bandage firmly wound round the head of an infant from the forehead upwards. (Illus. 18.) As the head develops, this bandage is loosened from time to time, and the result



Mangbatu woman by the fire



is that the top of the skull acquires a conical shape. It is a remarkable fact that this deformation of the skull does not seem in any way to affect the intellect, and it certainly improves the physiognomy by raising the upper eye-lids, so that the Mangbettu women appear to possess larger eyes than other negresses. They twist their hair into numerous thin plaits which are arranged on a thin wooden erection resembling an oyster-basket. (Illus. 19, 20.) This hair-dressing naturally occupies a great many hours, and is consequently worn for several weeks at a time. The women push various articles into their erection of hair: bleached monkey's bones, or long steel needles with flattened points. These things do not serve the purpose of hairpins, but are used for manicure, since the women take great care of their nails.

The Mangbettu women, at any rate those of the upper classes, wash themselves several times a day from head to foot, preferably with warm water. They do not understand the manufacture of soap, so that a present of a piece of soap pleases them almost more than anything. They paint their bodies with a stick dipped in the black juice of the gardenia fruit. (Illus. 22.) The hundred and fifty wives which the great Mangbettu chief Okondo possesses, do nothing all day but beautify themselves and cook for themselves and their lord. They are not free from the follies of fashion, and it is considered particularly "chic" to let the nails grow very long, perhaps in order to show that all the hard work is left to the slaves. Nenzima, a sister of Munza's, and a wife of Niangara's, who lived at Okondo's court, had most unsightly nails several inches long.

The freedom enjoyed by the Mangbettu women is very unusual among the negro races, and they are

far from being mere household drudges like the women of all the Bantu tribes, including the Asandes. On the arrival of a European traveller the women are as much to the fore as the men; they hurry forward to greet him, and shake hands in the friendliest manner, taking their part in the conversation.

The present chief Okondo always consults his favourite wives before taking any important step. Illustration 28 shows a portion of the royal family in full dress. Unfortunately the effect of their primitive good taste is somewhat spoiled by an admixture of European rubbish. Nenzima wears a collar made of about a hundred bullets, and the other wives display thick shawls, each of which is composed of a great many ropes of blue and white beads, and belts formed by joining a number of round, brass sledge-bells which were probably brought by a trader and exchanged for ivory. Of the wives, the ugliest is by far the most influential, and is always to be seen at her husband's side.

Okondo's residence occupies a site about two hundred yards square, surrounded by a high stockade. It comprises a hut for each of the fifteen favourite wives, and various store-houses. Each of the head wives has a hut to herself within the stockade, the largest being allotted to the first favourite. Okondo has no special hut for his own use, but invites himself as the guest of one or other of his wives. The rest of his wives, numbering about a hundred and fifty, live in huts outside the stockade, each in a separate hut occupied by herself and a couple of slave girls. Nenzima lives amongst them in a large house (illus. 25), and close by are the dignitaries of the court, most of whom are Okondo's nearest male relatives. (Illus. 26.)

The Congo State government allows the Mangbettu

ruler to retain a considerable amount of power. He possesses a lifeguard armed with muzzle loaders, and himself pronounces judgment on all criminals excepting murderers.

The administration of justice takes up the greater part of Okondo's time. Every morning, from eight to twelve, he sits under an awning in a European deck-chair, with a bottle of palm-wine beside him, and his favourite wives perched behind on footstools, while he listens to complaints of every kind. The accused stands at a respectful distance of about twenty paces, and defends himself in a fluent torrent of words, accompanied by vehement gesticulations, occasionally making use of small sticks in order to elucidate his meaning. Behind him sit the plaintiff and witnesses, and still further back, the native audience. Most of the cases have to do with theft or conjugal infidelity, which are punished with hard labour, the criminals being chained together in gangs.

As an emblem of authority the king carries a large sickle-shaped knife known as a *trumbach*. Most of these knives are made of iron, with a wooden handle, but the king's *trumbach* is of brass, with an ivory handle. (Illus. 29.) These artistically shaped knives are among the finest examples of Mangbettu smith's work, and call for high praise considering how rude are the tools at the workmen's disposal. (Illus. 17, and 30-32.)

The lance takes the first place among their weapons. (Illus. 72.) There are six distinct varieties, differing in size and shape, each of which bears a special name. The heavier lances are employed for hunting big game such as elephants or buffaloes, and are thrusting weapons which never leave the hunter's hand. The

lighter varieties are used as javelins, and constitute the chief fighting weapon of the warriors ; in battle half a dozen or so are held in the left hand, and thrown rapidly one after the other with the right hand. (Illus. 27.) Meanwhile the combatants cover themselves skilfully with large, square shields, made of a light kind of wood. These shields are quite smooth, except for an irregular boss in the centre.

Bows and arrows are little used in warfare by the Mangbettus, who regard them as the weapons of the lower classes. There are a great many different varieties of arrow-heads (illus. 73), each of which is a masterpiece of iron work, with symmetrically arranged spikes, and barbs. The heads are fixed on to the shafts by means of bast, and close to the junction there is always a knob in order to facilitate the snapping of the shaft, and to render more difficult the extraction of the head from the wound. The bows are about three feet in length, with strings made of rotang.

The pottery, wood-carving, and basket-work of the Mangbettus far surpasses those of any other negro tribe. (Illus. 29-71.) The ornamentation of the oil and water flasks shows exceptional talent and originality. The wood used for carving is taken from huge *Rubiaceæ* trees, and is soft and smooth, resembling our poplar wood. The trunks of these trees are fifty feet high before the first branch is reached, and their diameter is over six feet. The Mangbettus make their boats, shields, bowls, and stools of this wood.

Iron-work, pottery, and wood-carving are exclusively the men's work, but the women give evidence of their skill in all kinds of basket-work (illus. 74), including the skirts or *legbes* which hang from their waists by a cord, and are made of boiled banana leaves. The decoration

is cut out from the blackened leaves of the same plant, and is sewn on by means of primitive needles. Of the fifty *legbes* that I collected there are no two absolutely alike, but they all show a highly developed sense of proportion, and wonderfully good taste. (Illus. 50-57.)

The men's straw hats also afford scope for the display of individual taste. They are almost all square in shape, on a round base, but in their ornamentation wonderfully artistic patterns are employed which would do credit to a European workman. (Illus. 58-68.) If these examples of a primitive art are compared with those of our modern straw hat industry, it becomes evident that in some things, at any rate, our workmanship is surpassed by that of the negroes. The hats are always dyed black, white, or red, these being the only available colours. White is the natural colour of the straw when it has been bleached in the sun; red is obtained from powdered cam-wood, and black from the juice of the gardenia fruit.

The Mangbettus are past masters in the art of building, and their huts are the prettiest, and at the same time the most solid of all the negro dwellings that I have ever seen. The huts are for the most part round, with a diameter of about twenty feet. The walls are of mud, and the roofs of palm-leaves, covered in with a water-tight layer of grass. Each hut is surrounded by a wooden stockade, the interstices of which are filled up with mud. The floor is made of mud, well beaten in, and raised about a foot above the ground so as to keep out the damp. The furniture comprises a bed at one side, and a hearth in the middle of the floor. The bed rests on four stout posts driven into the earth, which in the huts of the chief's wives

are often decorated with carving. The mattress consists of a thick layer of dried leaves. The Mangbettu huts are kept scrupulously clean, and there is a space of about a foot between the roof and the wall which admits fresh air and light, and allows the smoke to escape.

The architectural genius of the Mangbettus shows itself particularly in the building of the large halls known as *bassas*. Okando's *bassa* is a large rectangular building three hundred and twenty feet long, and a hundred and sixty feet wide. (Illus. 74.) The floor is forty feet high in the middle, and slopes down to a height of six feet at each side. These vast halls are used as sheltered assembly rooms on festal occasions.

It is one of the traditions of the Mangbettus that each of their kings should possess a *bassa* of his own.

They are a light-hearted race, and enjoy a greater number of festivities than any other negro tribe. They celebrate every occasion, whether of joy or sorrow, with dancing, and on moonlight nights the noise of their drums and trumpets often makes sleep impossible.

The day before my departure Okondo organised special dancing festivities in my honour. Led by the king and his numerous wives, the natives executed a kind of polonaise, in which the dancers moved in circles, one behind the other. Men and women, old and young alike, took part in this dance for hours at a stretch, until at last I begged the king to let me see some other dances.

He accordingly executed a wonderful solo dance, which was the most striking that I have ever witnessed. His wives, a hundred and fifty in number, sat on their stools in a wide semi-circle. They bowed backwards and forwards



27. Mangbatu warriors.



28. Sultan Okondo with his four chief wives in gala costume. ✕



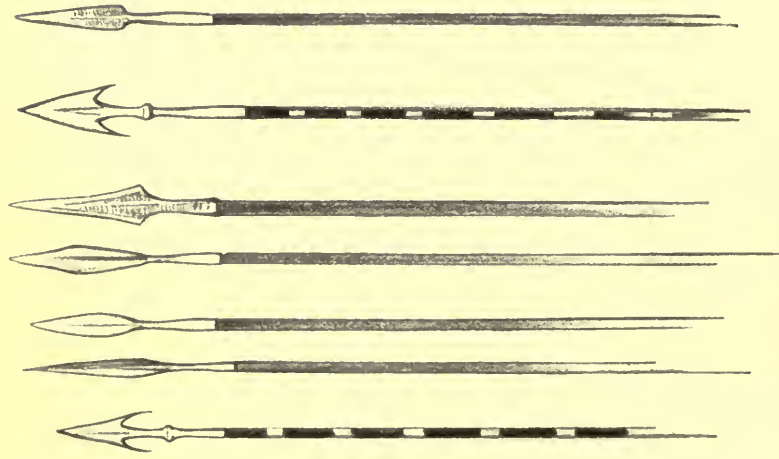
29—71. Examples

29—33. Sickles. 34—40. Bottles. 41, 42. Pottery. 43—46. Carved wood stools. 47—49. Wooden d

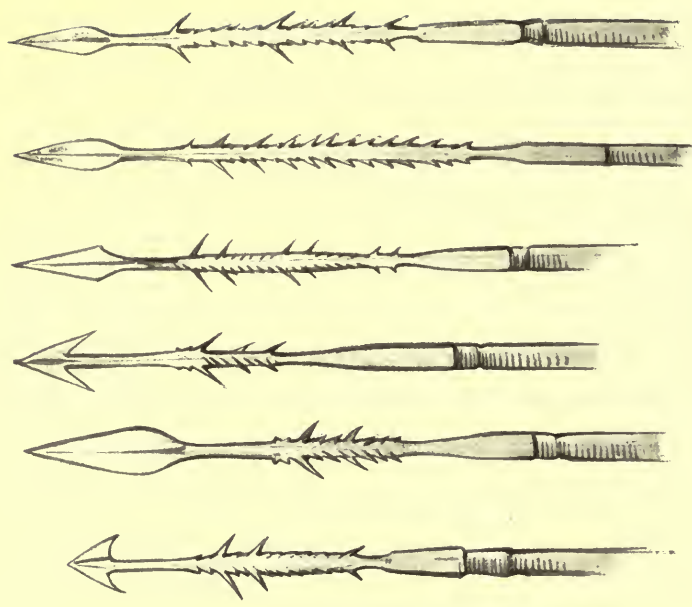


batu handicraft.

57. Women's Aprons. 58—68. Men's Straw hats. 69. Kettle-drum. 70. Axe. 71. Ivory trumpet.



72. Mangbatu lances.



73. Mangbatu arrow-heads.

from their waists, at the same time rocking their heads from one shoulder to the other, and waving their arms in peculiar serpentine movements in time to the music. They sang sweetly to the accompaniment of kettledrums, trumpets, drums, and rattling instruments, which made an ear-splitting din, whilst the king danced like a madman in the centre of the semi-circle. He whirled his arms and swung his legs after the cossack fashion, now waving them horizontally above the ground, now throwing them high into the air. He bounded and pranced for several hours without a rest, until at last he sank exhausted at the feet of one of his wives. The sun had set before the crowd dispersed, and even then some of the women continued dancing with untiring energy.

It is surprising to find that these cannibals, who but a generation ago were accustomed to kill children, and who if left to their own devices would probably not hesitate to return to their inhuman practices, display on the other hand kindly qualities such as devotion to their parents, children, and wives, and politeness to Europeans. I have often seen the Mangbettu women stroking their children, and watching their games with interest and amusement. I have even seen them touch their babies' hands with their lips, which is all the more noteworthy because kissing is unknown among negroes.

With regard to their religion, I can only say that they believe in the existence of a superior and invisible being, whose dwelling is supposed to be in the sky. They are very respectful towards their dead, whom they bury near their huts, and they bring offerings of food to the shades of the departed.

They also possess legends and songs, which they

sing to the accompaniment of their mandolines. Some of these songs contain beautiful thoughts, and the following verse, which was taken down at the dictation of an old Mangbettu bard, may serve as an example of the poetry of these primitive people :—

“ After I have passed away,
Do not lay me near your dwelling,
You'll forget me day by day.
Lay me near the flowing river,
That the frogs and water birds
May bewail me there for ever.”

CHAPTER XVIII

TOWARDS THE NILE

My visit to the Mangbettu tribe was the most interesting of all my African experiences. I felt quite at home among these negroes, who in spite of their cannibal tendencies, are a highly cultivated people, and scarcely a day passed that did not afford some interesting episode. As I packed up my ethnological treasures, and left Okondo's village to return to Niangara, it saddened me to think that the time is not far distant when European civilisation will have swept away the last traces of romantic originality from among this proud and primitive people.

I spent several days in Niangara packing my Mangbettu collection in readiness for the twenty-five days' journey to the Nile. As soon as all my preparations were complete, I set off with fifteen additional bearers, and four days later I reached Dungu, where I was cordially welcomed by my old friend the "Chef de zone" Bareau.

Dungu is a very large station. Originally, like all the stations of the Uelle district, it was built on a narrow site, the houses being crowded together, and surrounded with a wall and moat as a defence against the attacks of the Asandes. But now that this bitter strife is at an end, and peace reigns, the inhabitants are no longer restricted to such a narrow space, and there are a great many houses outside the fortifications.

Dungu is situated in the middle of the richest elephant district of the whole Northern Congo colony, and is, consequently, a centre of attraction for numerous Greek and Arab traders, who come from Khartoum and Entebbe, and carry on a brisk trade in ivory. The days are past when a tusk weighing sixty pounds could be bought for a trumpet or a hussar's uniform, but even at the present time a mule is eagerly accepted in exchange for one large, or two medium sized tusks.

Seven days' march along an excellent road brought me to Faradje. The country is thinly populated, but contains many varieties of big game, including elands, saiga-, grass-, and equine-antelopes, elephants, buffaloes, giraffes, elks (*Taurotragus derbianus gigas*), and the so-called white rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros simus*). This animal's skin is not white, but possibly when first seen by European travellers, it may have been bathing in a chalky pool, and consequently have appeared white in the sunlight. The chief point of distinction between this almost extinct animal and the common *Rhinoceros bicornis* is its much broader mouth, the upper lip of which is not prolonged into a snout. It is, moreover, larger, and has longer tusks than its cousin. Next to the elephant it is the largest known land mammal, and its anterior tusk exceeds five feet in length. Fifty years ago it was quite common in South Africa, but English sportsmen and Dutch settlers have hunted it until it is practically extinct. It is now to be found only in Lado and the surrounding districts, and in the immediate neighbourhood of Faradje it is still fairly common. The game laws of the Anglo-Egyptian and Belgian governments will, I hope, safeguard the existence of this gigantic relic of a bygone age.

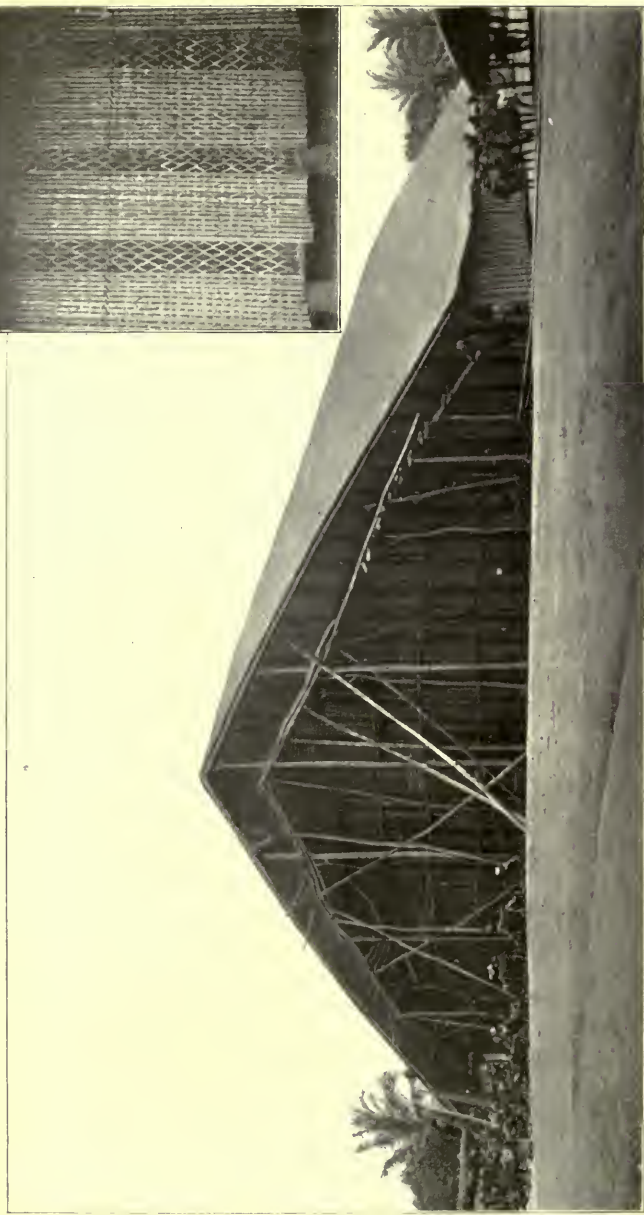
Abba is the eastern frontier station of the Belgian



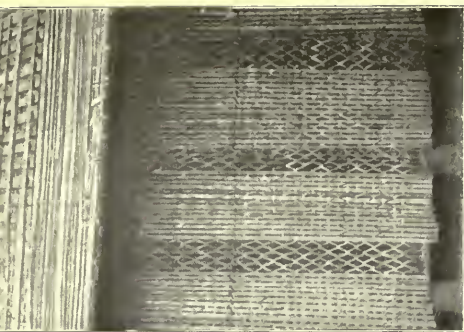
74. Plaiting.



75. Okondo and his wives dancing.



76. Okondo's banqueting-hall.



77. Side wall and roof of the hall.

Uelle district, and its high situation affords a fine view of the chain of hills which forms the watershed between the two largest river systems of Africa, and also the boundary between the Anglo-Egyptian and Belgian territories.

It was here that I received the first news of the Morocco crisis. I was on the point of setting out through British territory on my way home to Germany, and I could imagine nothing more inconvenient for me than an Anglo-German war. I heard now for the first time of the stirring events in Agadir, and I must confess that I dreaded the result more for my own sake than for patriotic reasons.

I heard that Inspector Dove-Bey, the English Governor of Lado-Enclave, residing at Yei, was a very friendly gentleman, and I came to the conclusion that even if he knew of my connection with the army, he was unlikely to make me a prisoner of war on the spot. So I made up my mind to push on to Yei with all possible dispatch, remaining in Abba only long enough to comply with the customs regulations, and to change my Belgian money into English currency.

Scarcely three hours' journey from Abba I came to a small station high up among the hills, where half a dozen soldiers of the Soudanese Constabulary guard the frontier.

I was favourably impressed by the appearance of these troops, whose deportment, equipment, and uniform leave nothing to be desired. Instead of the blue blouses of the French and Belgian colonial troops, which soon become unsightly, they wear khaki-coloured sweaters and breeches, laced shoes with blue puttees, and grey slouch hats. They are armed with modern double-barrel Lee-Metford rifles, and carry their cart-

ridge belts slung over their left shoulders. The Soudanese Constabulary is composed of former "regulars," and the latter are recruited from the warlike tribes of the Upper Nile: the Shilluks, Dinkas, etc.

Yei, the first Anglo-Egyptian station, came into sight on the fourth day. From the flag-staff in front of the Inspector's residence the Union Jack and the Egyptian Crescent fluttered together, as a sign of the confederate government. The *kaimakam* Dove-Bey, a tall, splendid-looking Englishman received me with the words, "I congratulate you on your long journey; I have been expecting you for some time."

In the person of Inspector Dove-Bey I became acquainted with a typical English Soudan officer: a very friendly gentleman, with whom I spent many pleasant hours.

The Anglo-Egyptian Soudan possesses a military government. All the high officials are officers of the British army, who on entering the Anglo-Egyptian contingent, are promoted to a superior rank, and are paid by the Egyptian government. Only the lower ranks from that of a captain downwards are occupied by Egyptians, and below the rank of a lieutenant there are negro officers. The army doctors are mostly Syrians, and the head physicians Englishmen. The relations between the English, Egyptian, and Syrian officers are invariably those of superiors towards inferiors, for there is no intercourse between the different nationalities when they are off duty. The Egyptian officers are consequently somewhat embittered against the Englishmen; but the position of the latter is in no way endangered, since the bulk of the Soudanese privates is on their side. These admirable soldiers



78. Okondo's pas seul in the circle of his wives.



79. Mangbatu kettle-drum of wood.



80. Wooded plain between Dangu and Faradje.

regard with contempt their unreliable and incompetent Egyptian officers.

The English officers in the Soudan receive six months' leave at the close of every year of service, and as they are obliged to make use of it, it has a very beneficial effect on their health. All these advantages—the long and frequent leave, higher rank, and excellent pay, render the Egyptian service very popular.

Dove-Bey, a Captain in the British army, here enjoys the rank and pay of an Egyptian Lieutenant-Colonel. He lives in a large house, furnished in a luxurious style unknown in the French and Belgian colonies.

I spent three days in Yei, as the next Nile steamer was not expected to reach Redjaf for another week or two. I had many lively arguments with my amiable host regarding European politics in general, and Anglo-German relations in particular. I was relieved to find that the crisis was over, and that the war scare was a thing of the past.

Soon after crossing the Anglo-Egyptian frontier, I noticed that round all the river bridges and fords the trees had been cleared away for a distance of several hundred yards. My supposition that this was a precautionary measure against sleeping-sickness proved to be correct. A Scotch doctor devised this admirable expedient, which has also been adopted in the German colonies. This doctor was in charge of the large sleeping-sickness hospital camp in Yei, with beds for several hundred patients. A visit convinced me that the latter are very well cared for, and that, unlike those in the French and Belgian sleeping-sickness hospitals, they have no wish to run away.

Kind treatment and skilful nursing brought about this astonishing result.

Dove-Bey overwhelmed me with kind attentions. He was himself an enthusiastic sportsman, and when he learned that I had not yet succeeded in shooting an elephant, he advised me to try my luck on the road to Redjaf. He gave me his own trusted hunter, the soldier Abderahman, as guide, lent me his mule in place of the one that had to be sent back to Dungu, and even entrusted to me his precious double-barrelled express rifle, as being more effective than my own Mauser. I was thus equipped in the best possible manner, and it was with deep feelings of gratitude for all his kindness that I took leave of Dove-Bey. During the two days' journey to the small station of Loka I noticed innumerable fresh elephant spoors, but the very long grass, which entirely concealed both me and the mule, offered a serious obstacle to following them up. However, my guide Abderahman assured me that beyond Loka the country was more favourable for hunting, and that there were plenty of elephants in that neighbourhood.

Loka is the next station to Redjaf on the Nile road. It is small and prettily situated, but since the annexation of the Enclave by Britain, it has lost its former importance. The most attractive feature of the country round Loka is the range of granite hills, of which the Loka Mountain is the highest. (Illus. 81.)

As I approached the Nile, I found the country becoming more and more hilly, and I traversed forests of bamboo, about thirty feet in height, which were the favourite shelter for elephants during the heat of the day. (*Vide* coloured Illus.).

Two days' march from Loka we heard elephants



Family of elephants in a bamboo thicket near Lado



trumpeting near the main road. I knew by experience that it is only young bulls travelling in a herd that trumpet, and not the old, solitary elephants that are sought after by hunters. Nevertheless I made up my mind to follow the herd, in order once more to enjoy the excitement of watching these gigantic beasts. The grass was very long, and I was obliged to remain in the saddle so that I might see even a little way ahead. The elephants had trampled a path eight or nine feet broad, so that we could follow them without difficulty through the long grass. Abderahman was leading the way when all at once he stopped, and after listening for a moment he whispered to me that there were elephants close at hand. I stood up in my stirrups, and peered in every direction, but could see nothing. About a hundred yards ahead there was a bamboo thicket in which something could be heard rustling.

I dismounted quickly, and seizing my heavy rifle crept along behind the guide. As we entered the thicket he touched my arm, and pointed to a grey mass scarcely fifteen paces away. He shook his head, for his practised eye had distinguished a cow elephant, whilst I was still vainly endeavouring to make out which was its head and which its tail. So we crept back the way we had come, and followed another track which brought us to a second bamboo thicket, which was so dense that riding was impossible. The trail led up and down hill, and we could see only a few yards ahead. Abderahman reconnoitred, and finally pointed out a clearance a little way off, towards which we directed our steps.

The clearance was about a hundred yards long by fifty broad, and was enclosed on all sides by a dense forest of bamboo, in which we could hear the animals trampling and rustling in every direction. Every

now and then I caught sight of a square yard of greyish brown hide, a huge ear, or a trunk. But the tusks were short and thin, for we were in the midst of a herd of cows and calves. It was not a very safe position, for some of the animals ran in our direction, and might have accidentally trampled on us.

Even the cold-blooded Abderahman, who subsequently gave proof of unusual courage and endurance, was growing uneasy, and advised me to fire. As I did not wish to kill either a cow or a calf, but only a large bull, I fired into the air.

As the shot reverberated in the hills there was a regular stampede, and the herd crashed through the bamboos. An old elephant mother who was scarcely ten yards away, lifted her trunk high in the air, spun round on her hind legs like a circus horse, and trotted off. Abderahman and I returned to camp, deeply disappointed at not having had better sport.

The following morning, accompanied only by Abderahman and one "boy," I set out before sunrise on a five hours' march to a village in the neighbourhood of which I hoped to find some old, solitary bull elephants. Huge acacia trees grew at intervals on the prairie, which was covered with comparatively short grass. We reached the tiny village about noon, and the chief sent out some of his men in search of elephants. Two hours later one of them returned with the welcome news that he had seen two large elephants within a short distance of the village, and that their tusks were as thick as a man's thigh.

I shouldered my rifle, and accompanied only by Abderahman, followed the guide. In half an hour's time we had reached the spot where the native had seen the elephants, but unfortunately they had not

waited for us to arrive. Abderahman nosed about like a blood-hound, investigating the trampled grass. Presently he pointed out one of the tracks, along which we crept cautiously in single file. He was not mistaken, for in a few minutes we came upon a huge bull scarcely twenty paces away. He seemed to be asleep, for he did not even move his ears. I raised my rifle, and aimed at the base of his trunk ; but my heart was beating so violently that the sight danced about, and when I fired the animal did not fall as I expected, but flapped his big ears, lifted his trunk, swung round, and trotted off.

It was the largest elephant that I have ever seen, and I was grievously disappointed at losing him. It is, however, exceedingly difficult to shoot an elephant from the front, and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince had a similar experience, which he ably describes in his hunting diary.

We followed the elephant until sunset, but I had little hope of seeing him again, for I felt sure that a bullet arrested by the big bony plates of his skull would do him but little harm. The equanimity of my black guide was in no way disturbed. "It was Allah's will," he remarked placidly. "Perhaps you will have better luck to-morrow!" He was right as it turned out, though it might easily have been otherwise.

Early the next morning I was informed that two more large elephants had been seen in the neighbourhood of the village. We soon found their spoor, and tracked them through the bamboo forest and open plains. After a two hours' march we caught sight of two huge bulls, about a hundred yards apart, and about the same distance from us. It was impossible

to ascertain from behind which of the two had the better tusks, so I sent Abderahman on in front to investigate.

He had not gone far when he pointed to the elephant in whose tracks I had been following, so I pushed on to the left, so as to get the animal broadside on. Abderahman was carrying my Mauser and all my cartridges, and I had in my hand the aforementioned double-barrelled rifle. I had decided to fire both barrels of the latter, and then to take my Mauser from my companion, who was meanwhile to reload the elephant rifle.

The elephant suddenly stood stock still and then turned in our direction, pricking his ears and raising his trunk. "Now or never," I said to myself, and slowly raising the sight, I fired both barrels almost simultaneously at a point immediately above the left shoulder. The minutes that ensued will remain fixed in my memory for ever. The elephant charged on the instant, without a moment's pause. My rifle was empty, and Abderahman was thirty paces away between me and the infuriated elephant, holding all my cartridges. I did not wait for him to give me my Mauser, but took to my heels, and ran like a hare.

I have never run so fast in my life, and my gymnastic teacher would have admired my agility. After running about thirty yards I doubled, and concealed myself behind the nearest tree, lying flat on the ground, as I have seen the negroes do. But while I was still running I had heard the whistling breathing of my pursuer, and I realised that he was mortally wounded in the lungs. Then I heard a shot, and something crashed past me a few moments later.

There was dead silence, so I rose from the ground



81. The Loka mountain in storm.



82. Rejaf on the White Nile.



83. A splendid prize.

and climbed the tree. I caught sight of Abderahman standing almost on the same spot where I had left him at the critical moment. I felt a little ashamed of my cowardice as I returned to his side, and learned what had occurred.

Abderahman had realized immediately that the first elephant was mortally wounded, and consequently paid little heed to his impetuous onslaught. He turned his attention to the second uninjured bull, which likewise charged him. He allowed the beast to come within three yards (the distance was easily measured afterwards in the trampled grass), and then shot him in the head with my Mauser. This gave the elephant such a shock that he turned and fled.

Meanwhile the first elephant had collapsed on to the ground. I loaded the double-barrelled gun, and we approached cautiously from behind. Abderahman pulled his tail, and as he did not stir, we knew that he was dead. I shook the brave Soudanese warmly by the hand; I have come across many instances of fearless courage, but nothing to equal this man's daring, which bordered on the supernatural.

It was a fine elephant, even for this neighbourhood, and his ivory weighed 178 lbs. The news spread rapidly, and within a few hours the deserted plain was crowded with negroes carrying off basketsful of the meat to their distant villages. Only the skin and bones were left to the vultures.

Three days later I accomplished my last day's march in Africa. Early in the morning we caught sight of the Redjaf Mountain, rose-tipped by the rising sun: a steep, rugged, solitary granite peak, several thousand feet high. I knew that beyond it flowed the Nile.

For the last time the sun blazed down upon my battered helmet, which was held together only by means of sticking-plaster ; for the last time the bearers panted and groaned under the weight of their heavy loads. But to-day no one complained, and they pushed on without halting every few minutes as was their wont. When at last we reached the foot of the mountain, a broad valley lay stretched before us, through which flowed old Father Nile himself, gleaming in the sunlight like a silver ribbon.

My Cameroon and Togo " boys " shouted and roared with delight. Now at last the hateful journey was at an end, and a ship would soon bear them back to their beloved country. This was the chief cause of their joy ; another was the prospect of an ox, which I had promised them on the day we reached the Nile.

Redjaf is a small station lying between the mountain of the same name and the Nile. (Illus. 82.) It comprises a Soudanese village, four or five Government buildings, and half a dozen factories belonging to Greek and Indian traders. Being the terminus for the steamer service of the White Nile, it is an important centre for the Congo ivory and india-rubber trade.

A fortnight elapsed before the arrival of the Soudan Development and Exploration Company's steamer. At first I was fully occupied in paying off my caravan, and in writing letters and reports, but finally I grew impatient and often climbed the mountain to gaze northward through my telescope. At length, on the 17th of September, a black cloud of smoke heralded the coming of the steamer " Gordon Pasha." She appeared to be crawling south at a snail's pace, but at last she was moored alongside, and my " boys " greeted her with three hearty cheers. Our baggage was stowed

on board the same evening, and the following morning we steamed down-stream.

My exploratory travels were now at an end, and the rest of the journey was a mere pleasure trip. In Khartoum, von Wiese and I celebrated our happy meeting after a separation of thirteen months, and in a short time we enjoyed the happiest moment of the whole journey : that of our safe return home !



CHAPTERS XIX to XXIV
GERMAN CONGO AND SOUTH
CAMEROONS

BY

DR ARNOLD SCHULTZE



CHAPTER XIX

FROM STANLEYPOL TO MOLUNDU

ON the banks of the Stanley pool near Kinshassa, during the last days of August in the year 1910, the members of our party displayed a feverish activity. They were sorting vast mountains of luggage piled on the Congo steamer's landing stage, and beneath the scanty shade of a gigantic tree (illus. 84), which since the days of Stanley had seen many expeditions setting out for the interior. It took two hard days' work to reduce the baggage to order, and to stow the greater part of it on board the "Valérie," which was to convey most of the members of the expedition up the Congo and Ubangi rivers.

A small share of the loads was reserved for the botanist Dr Mildbraed, and myself. We were to travel in the wake of the rest of the party as far as the Ssanga River, and here we were to turn aside to explore that part of the South Cameroons which lies between this river and the West Coast.

We had to wait at least ten days for a steamer to the Ssanga, so that we were able to gratify our wish to investigate the country round Brazzaville, which seemed to offer a rich field for zoological and botanical research. Not having much time at our disposal, we decided to make one of the stations of the Congo railway our headquarters.

The Belgian railway officials, Messieurs Goubert

and Schubb, were most kind in helping us to carry out this plan, and on the 30th of August we went by train with our "boys" and the necessary camp baggage to Kimuenza, a station twelve miles from Kinshassa. From the train we caught glimpses of the luxuriant vegetation, recognising old friends from the Cameroons such as the inevitable umbrella tree of West Africa (*Musanga Smithii*) which grows here in great profusion.

Here and there amid the dark green foliage of the tropical forest, were purple patches of flowering *Combretum*, warning us of the approaching rainy season. On the plains, too, the fresh, green grass was springing up, and over the blue, yellow, and white flowers hovered little scarlet butterflies, the first heralds of spring.

We pitched our tents under the fruit trees, not far from the little corrugated iron house belonging to the black stationmaster. It was an ideal spot (illus. 85), on a wooded slope of the Lukaya valley, shaded by low, gnarled trees, many of them in full bloom, and surrounded by swarms of buzzing bees. The silence was broken only by the rumbling of the trains, and the frequent blowing of their whistles in which the black engine-drivers indulged.

Shaded by dense forests, the little Lukaya River flows in its deep bed on the other side of the railway. The soil is sandy, with here and there a patch of clay, and its fertility is evidenced by the luxuriance of the vegetation.

On the very first day of our arrival in Kimuenza, we crossed the swaying liana bridge which spanned the yellow waters of the Lukaya immediately opposite our camp. This is the district renowned for the botanical collections of the Jesuit Fathers, Gillet and Vanderyst.



84. Among the baobab trees of Kinchassa.



85. Our camp near Kimuentsa.



86. Abandoned mission station near Kimuentsa.



87. *Hymenocardia* steppe near Kimuentsa.



88. Steppe near Kimuentsa with *Amaryllidaceae* after the first showers.

Here the beautiful *Bombax lucayensis* displays its gorgeous blooms, and the peculiar dwarf bamboos vie with graceful dragon-trees and other evergreens in the stateliness of their stems. A tropical tangle of creepers enveloped all the other plants, whilst an almost impenetrable undergrowth of pine-apples bore witness to the cultivation of the former mission-station.

It was very unfortunate for the industrious Jesuit Fathers that circumstances obliged them to abandon Kimuenza, the scene of many years' activity, and begin all over again at Kisantu.

Soon after our arrival we were visited by natives, asking for medicine to ward off the evil effects of mosquito bites. This confirmed the evil reputation borne by Kimuenza in Stanley pool, where it was described to us as the centre of a district infested with sleeping-sickness. The natives assured us that whole villages had been depopulated by this disease, and their statements were confirmed by the presence of *Glossina palpalis* mosquitoes. There were fortunately only a few specimens of this noxious insect, but they pursued with us a subtle persistence unequalled by any other variety of winged blood-suckers. Even in our tents, pitched on the plain, we were not free from their insidious attacks, thus proving that the tsetse fly does not fear the sunshine.

On the first Sunday of our camp life on the bank of the Lukaya, I paid a visit to the abandoned site of the Mission, under the guidance of the negro station-master. (Illus. 86.) Part of the brick buildings is still in good preservation, and the activity of the Jesuit Fathers is evidenced by the mango, dragon-tree, and oil-palm avenues, and by the luxuriant growth of several foreign

plants. But the gloomy silence of the deserted buildings proclaims the devastating influence of the noxious poison for which no antidote has as yet been found. In the neighbourhood of the station there is a village, similarly deserted. Three or four natives died here every day, until at last the survivors decided to forsake this abode of death. The neglected cemetery of the Fathers completes the melancholy picture; a cast-iron cross and several wooden crosses, most of them lying on the ground, are overgrown by parched grass and scorched creepers. The woods surrounding the cemetery seem to be the breeding-place of these death-dealing flies, which gave evidence of their presence by pursuing us persistently. It is a curious fact that there is here no sign of water (the Mission Fathers were obliged to fetch their water supply from a distance), and this proves conclusively that tsetse flies are not confined to streams with overhanging trees.

A dull, introspective-looking native lives here with his family in a hut which is carefully shut up during the day, and cares for the remains of the Mission plantations. I was not able to ascertain whether he, too, was infected with the disease, but as a rule this spot is shunned by the natives.

It must have been most disheartening for the missionaries to see their people, Europeans and negroes alike, dying one by one of an epidemic whose nature was at that time not understood, and which has entirely depopulated vast regions of Africa.

Nothing short of the most severe measures, prohibiting any migration of the natives, would suffice, according to present day scientific knowledge, to check this fearful scourge. The tsetse flies abound everywhere,

and consequently a single infected man suffices to contaminate the whole district.

Mildbraed had not been able to accompany me on this memorable expedition, as he was suffering from violent pains in his limbs, which made him almost incapable of moving. He got no better, and was therefore reluctantly compelled to seek admittance in the Leopoldville Hospital, and it was with a heavy heart that I watched the departure of the train that conveyed him, on the 6th of September, to the Belgian Congo metropolis.

I was now alone with my "boys" in our big camp, and I sought distraction from my anxiety in a redoubled activity in collecting specimens. As far as possible I proceeded with Mildbraed's interrupted botanical work.

Although at first the results of our collecting were most promising, many of the zoological specimens being particularly rare, yet our work was considerably hindered by the prolonged absence of the overdue rainy season. It was everywhere far too dry, both in the forest and in the plains, and although the sky had been overcast for some time, the parched earth was still crying out for rain. The news that Mildbraed was suffering from rheumatic fever did not tend to raise my spirits. Our plans would have to be considerably modified, and the only redeeming feature of the case lay in the fact that Mildbraed had fallen ill at the very beginning of our travels, in a place where he could have the best possible care in his painful malady, Dr Broden of Leopoldville being the most experienced physician in the Belgian colony.

My ethnological studies in the neighbourhood of our camp came to a premature end, which although most

distressing, was not wholly unexpected. The influx of workmen for the construction of the Matadi and Stanley pool railway resulted in a considerable intermingling of the numerous tribes of the lower Congo, and consequently the greater part of their racial characteristics had been lost. However, I visited the nearest native village, hoping to gain some valuable information regarding the habits of the aborigines. My hopes were somewhat dashed when I caught sight of the plank doors of the otherwise typical native huts, but when the peaceful hum of a Singer's sewing machine fell upon my ear, I knew that my ethnological studies in Kimuenza were at an end; there was assuredly nothing more to be done in this district!

Towards the middle of September the rain at length materialised. On the 13th blue-grey clouds raced across the sky, and loud claps of thunder were audible though there was no lightning to be seen. The first showers were but slight, and made little impression on the baked ground. But the spell being once broken, the storms succeeded one another at shorter and shorter intervals with ever-increasing violence, while the rain fell in torrents. After every shower fresh flowers appeared in the midst of the grass, and in forest and plain alike the insects took on a new lease of life.

But the light green spring foliage of the *hymenocardiae* (illus. 87), the strychnine trees, and the *anonae* had many a battle to fight with the prairie fires which still raged through the dry grass, crackling over the arid slopes, and sending up thick clouds of smoke, whilst the burning leaves were scattered in every direction. These fires are lighted by the lazy natives, as the easiest means of removing the trees that they have cut down, or else in order

to destroy the cover which might conceal the few remaining head of game. In any case it is very destructive for agriculture, and the flames consume much valuable material which cannot be replaced.

The black native of Stanley pool is in this respect no worse than other negroes, but apart from his natural indolence, he embodies, in common with all mixed African races, a very unprepossessing type of Bantu. He invariably mistakes kind treatment for weakness, and responds with insolence to any friendly advances.

By the end of the month so much rain had fallen that the Lukaya had risen visibly, and the ground was soaked. All day the gorgeous blue *gladiolus* and the delicate ground orchid displayed their beauty, whilst every evening large *amaryllides* opened their snow-white, purple-striped cups, which shone like stars on the prairie from sundown till dawn, filling the air with fragrance, and attracting moths of every kind. (Illus. 88.)

Unfortunately the approach of the rainy season gave rise to another, much less pleasant, phenomenon: namely, a plague of flies such as I have never before experienced in Africa. Every evening they made their way through the smallest aperture into the hot atmosphere of my tent, making it almost impossible to do any work. As there is no stagnant water in the neighbourhood of Kimuenza, the prevalence of these bloodthirsty creatures can only be accounted for by the great number of pine-apple bushes. The raindrops accumulate at the base of their leaves, and form an ideal breeding-ground for flies. Needless to say, the tsetse fly likewise appeared in ever-increasing numbers.

The rapid development of the flowers promised

to compensate Mildbraed for his period of enforced idleness. I visited him in hospital, and learned that the tedium of his seclusion was considerably lightened by the presence of a Danish officer in the Belgian service : Commandant Willemoes d'Obry, the official geographer of the Congo colony. This gentleman supplied my comrade with literature, and was very kind in paying him frequent visits. But it is very trying, especially in the tropics, for a naturalist to be confined to bed just as all nature is awakening to new life, and Mildbraed awaited with impatience the day of his discharge from hospital. I could not visit him as often as I wished, because the journey from Kimuenza to Leopoldville and back could not be accomplished in the day, owing to the inconvenience of the train connections ; it was, moreover, a most disagreeable experience. The single first-class fare from Kimuenza to Kinshassa is fifty-eight francs, and as the fares for other journeys are in proportion, practically no one but officers and officials travel first-class. My only other resource was to travel with the natives, and share with them the filthy seats of the open carriages, in which the smoke from the engine soon obliterates any difference of colouring, and in which I was obliged to accustom my nose to the various African odours.

I went for a long walk one day to the highest hill in the neighbourhood, which afforded a grand view as far as Leopoldville and Brazzaville, embracing almost the whole of Stanley pool, and I made up my mind that when I next visited Mildbraed, I would go on foot. I had no cause to regret my decision, for as I walked along the railway I realised how much of the beauty of nature one loses in travelling by train.

Walking over the railway sleepers was more tiring



89. Landscape in the Sanga delta.



90. Steamer Commandant Lamy before Wesso.



91. Flooded village on the Djah.



92. Village of Wesso on the Sanga.



93. Confluence of the Sanga and Djah.



94. Station of Molundu at low water.

than I had anticipated, especially near Dolo, where the sand was almost on a level with the rails. The wide stretches of sand covered with short grass, vividly recalled the downs on the shores of the North Sea, and the only thing wanting to complete the illusion was the heather. My walk ended in the Avenue Souverain, leading to the hill on which the hospital stands. As I climbed this hill in the scorching sun, my legs began to ache, and I decided to return by train.

On the 8th of October Mildbraed at last returned to camp, and during the few days that remained before the departure of our steamer, we were able to take walks together in the neighbourhood. Mildbraed instructed me in his method of collecting botanical specimens by means of field glasses and a rifle. When he caught sight of a branch laden with flowers or fruit at the top of a tall tree, provided it was not too closely bound to the other branches by creepers, he shot it down with an expanding bullet. But apart from the very awkward position, the branch he aimed at was small, and many cartridges were wasted before the coveted specimen fell from its dizzy height. Consequently in order to make a collection of about two hundred different trees, which could not have been obtained in any other manner, we employed more than four thousand cartridges. In the case of the beautiful flowering lianas, the difficulties were even greater, and we were obliged to invoke the aid of a skilled native climber. I feel sure that to the uninitiated at home the complete collection conveyed but a faint conception of the patient toil entailed in obtaining each individual specimen.

We struck our tents on the morning of the 17th of

October, and our Cameroon boys were greatly excited at the prospect of returning home, for they seemed to imagine that we had nothing more pressing to do than to travel straight to their native land.

It was evening when at last we rested our weary limbs in the "Hotel Cosmopolite" at Kinshassa; we soon discovered that here, too, the mosquitoes were in high spirits owing to the commencing rainy season, and they did their best to make our lives a burden.

A thunderstorm broke over Kinshassa during the night of the 19th of October, and offered a striking example of the violence of which an African tornado is capable. The fury of the storm was such that the heavy *Adansonia* fruits were torn from their branches, and hurled with the noise of a cannonade on to the galvanised iron roofs of the houses.

The following day it was unusually sultry instead of being cooler as we had anticipated. This was specially trying for me, as I had important business to transact in the French capital, Brazzaville, where I was anxious to pay my respects to the Governor-General Merlin, who was on the eve of returning home.

Stanleypool being the focus of the whole Congo basin, everything is on a grand scale, and I was not surprised to find that the fare for the short journey from Kinshassa to Brazzaville was twenty francs. The distances in Brazzaville are so great that in order to transact my business I was obliged to be on my feet for three hours. This was a doubtful pleasure, as the streets were new and shadeless, and I was dressed in a tight white suit with a stiff collar, which soon succumbed to a temperature of 86° F. Fortunately I was able to tidy myself at an English factory, and could accept with a clear conscience the Governor-

General's invitation to an official breakfast. I fully appreciated the kindly hospitality of the officials and ladies of Brazzaville. I realized at the same time that on quitting the Governor's palace I was taking leave for many months of all the comforts of European civilization.

Early the following morning we conveyed our baggage to Brazzaville, but it took us the whole day to comply with the troublesome custom-house regulations, and it was late in the evening before the last load was on board the "Commandant Lamy," a paddle steamer of 150 tons burden which was to convey us to the Ssanga.

We felt that we had earned a good night's rest, but we were doomed to disappointment, for our first night on board proved a typical African experience. Our cabins were said to be mosquito-proof, the windows and doors being covered with gauze, so that we had packed our mosquito nets in the baggage sealed by the custom-house official. We soon regretted our over-confidence, for in spite of all our efforts the windows refused to shut, and the gnats of the Stanley pool came through the inch-wide aperture in swarms, so that we did not close our eyes all night and were lamentably bitten.

Fortunately the fears that we entertained during our first night on board were not justified, and the "Commandant Lamy" proved to be a very comfortable vessel. The captain, a broad-shouldered Breton, was at first somewhat reserved, but he soon thawed and became a genial travelling companion.

When the steamer left her mooring on the morning of the 23rd of October, nearly all the cabins were occupied. The passengers were, for the most part, employés of French Concession Companies, but we

also made the acquaintance of a Captain Schmoll, the new chief of the French station, N'goila, and his lieutenant, both of whom had lived for many years in the tropics.

The first part of the voyage gave us a good idea of the vast extent of the Stanley pool. It was noon by the time we had left behind this wide expansion of the Congo with its wooded islands. The banks of the river are precipitous, and consist of sandstone cliffs about five hundred feet high, partly brown, and partly snow-white in colour. Francis Pocock, Stanley's trusted companion on his first Congo voyage, compared them to the chalk cliffs of England. Several recent landslips showed that the banks are not very solid.

We now entered the so-called "chenal" of the Congo, where the dark-brown waters of the river are compressed into a narrow and consequently deep bed, before widening out into the Stanley pool, just above the last falls. The voyage was very attractive, the ever-changing hilly scenery forming a picturesque background to the landscape.

The steamer made her way steadily up-stream, from sunrise till evening, halting for the night only when the approaching darkness rendered further progress impossible. A village is usually chosen as a landing place, and the whole of the black crew, with the exception of the engineers, is sent ashore, so that they may not be exposed to the temptation of stealing, which would otherwise prove too strong for them. In spite of an assumed piety, the Bangalas are a dishonest tribe, but they bear a high reputation as river pilots and sailors.

On the third day of the voyage our steam steering

gear was out of order, and we stopped for repairs at Berghe-Ste. Marie.

The Kassai is one of the few tributaries of the great African river. Its mouth might be compared to that of the Mosel near Coblentz, but it is of course much larger than the Rhine. On the left bank of the Kassai, near its mouth, is the important town of Kwamouth, and on the right bank the Belgian mission station of Berghe-Ste. Marie. The population of the latter has fallen owing to the ravages of the sleeping-sickness, although it is still marked in heavy type on the map as if it were a large city. It often happens that towns that have played an important part in the history of Africa have their names in large print on the map, even after they have ceased to exist.

Our repairs did not take long, for the captain, like most commanders of the Congo steamers, was a certificated engineer. Soon after midday we were once more forced to heave to, this time on account of a violent storm which came up from the South with great rapidity. We hugged the shore until we came to a suitable place where we could make fast and await better weather. This precaution was not unnecessary, for owing to her shallow draught the steamer might easily have been capsized by a violent gust of wind. It is one of the most important duties of a Congo navigator to guard against surprise by one of these tornadoes, which come up with great rapidity.

So far we had encountered very few other vessels, one of them being a large Congo steamer carrying no passengers, but serving exclusively for the transport of building materials for the new Upper Congo railway. Early the following day we passed M'ponya, and left

the "chenal" behind us; the latter is certainly the most picturesque part of the Congo, and we were never tired of watching the changing landscapes flitting by on each bank.

The river here attains a width of about three miles, but immediately below the large Belgian station of Bolobo we entered a labyrinth of islands which rendered any further estimation of its width impossible. The Congo breaks up into a network of canals, which can be distinguished only by experienced river pilots. At noon on the 27th of October we passed the mouth of the Alima, which to us seemed exactly like the numerous deep, silent canals on both sides of the water-way.

The vegetation is peculiar and quite tropical in character, the greater part of the islands being covered with dense, well-nigh impenetrable jungle. The grey-green *parinarium* bushes, and the monotonous *alcorneae* with their dull poplar-like leaves bear a certain resemblance to European shrubs; but the dark copal trees and the tough rotang lianas enveloping everything with their whip-like strands and graceful fronds as they crawl along the ground or climb to the highest tree-tops, soon dispel the illusion.

Among this maze of islands there are occasional wide, green patches formed of deceptive, floating weeds, set in motion by the waves of passing steamers. These patches give rise to the floating papyrus islands which may be seen throughout the Lower Congo, together with the bright green clumps of *Pistia stratiotes*.

There was hardly a sign of life in all this district, but we were told that during the dry season wild animals are plentiful. In a small village below



95. Basanga women in canoe.



96. Basanga women with leg-rings.



97. Flooded forest near Wesso.

Mokutimpoko, where we spent the night of the 27th of October, we were shown a large mound composed of elephant skulls, a dumb but eloquent protest against the brutal extermination of these animals by man.

The traveller's attention is drawn to the colour of the Congo, which is deeper than that of any other African river. The peculiar brown tint of the water which may be observed at the mouth of this huge river, and even for several hundred miles out to sea, is caused by vegetable decomposition in the primeval forests at the origin of the numerous branches which unite to form the Congo. Here and there it happens that for some distance the water is thick and resembles "café au lait" owing to earthy ingredients brought by some tributary. Soon, however, the mud is filtered off by the floating islands or by the stony bed, and the water becomes quite clear, of a dark tea colour: red-brown where it is shallow, dark brown where it is deeper, and almost black in the deepest parts. The foam thrown up by the steamer's paddle-wheels was of a golden topaz tint.

The tea-coloured water of the rivers and streams of the Congo basin does not seem to suit the mosquitoes, and since leaving Brazzaville we had not once suffered from their attacks. The evil tsetse flies, however, are not apparently affected by this peculiarity of the water; they are indestructible and are found almost everywhere.

We landed three of our passengers at Kunda, above the mouth of the Alima, and a little further on we came to the delta at the mouths of the Likuala-Mossaka, Ssanga, and Green Likuala rivers. The next morning we reached Bonga, and here some of the French passengers were able to give vent to their

long suppressed hunting ardour. They stalked rhinoceroses and sand-pipers, and corroborated the excellent descriptions of their fellow-countryman, Daudet.

It was pouring with rain as the "Commandant Lamy" turned aside into one of the river channels which alter the direction of the current according as to whether the water is higher in the Likuala-Mossaka or in the Ssanga.

We were not yet accustomed to the many surprises which lay in store for us as we steamed up the Ssanga. First of all, towards noon, we passed through what may best be described as a primeval forest region, in which the copal appeared to be the commonest of the huge trees. Then followed rotang jungles of unparalleled luxuriance, alternating with dark green grass islands. But what astonished us most was the profusion of *Borassus* palms, for these trees prefer as a rule the dry soil of the prairies. Yet here they were growing in the midst of the forest, or standing in isolated clumps in the damp fields, and imparting a peculiar charm to the landscape. Mildbraed and I were accustomed to see these trees waving their fan-like branches in the desert, and it amazed us to find them here under such entirely different conditions, and at the same time in so flourishing a state.

During the dry season these prairies must form an ideal hunting ground; at present there was only a solitary buffalo to be seen, and after eyeing the steamer from a safe distance, he made off through the long grass at a heavy gallop.

The scenery on the banks of the Ssanga was very beautiful, and Mildbraed and I watched with silent enjoyment this incomparable picture unrolling itself before us. Towards evening the vast prairies with

their ever-changing scenes were so singularly picturesque that I can scarcely find words to describe them. The grandest natural park that I have ever seen occupied both banks of the Ssanga, about ten miles wide on the left bank, and about half this width on the right bank. (Illus. 89.)

We came to a standstill in the gathering dusk, but no dry spot could be found for the negroes to encamp, so that they were obliged to spend the night on board.

The following morning Mildbraed stood leaning over the side, gazing longingly through his telescope at the flowers growing on the banks. Suddenly at a bend in the river, the steamer seemed to anticipate his secret wishes, for the steering gear once more broke down, and we were obliged to make our way through the clinging weeds to the bank. Whilst the crew scurried and scrambled and ran excitedly hither and thither, Mildbraed and his specially trained "boys" tore down some of the flowering branches which overhung the deck and threatened to push overboard some of the piled up wood fuel.

Mildbraed's face was wreathed in smiles as he secured four new specimens and put them in his press. Our position might, however, have been exceedingly unpleasant, supposing the bank had been composed of rocks instead of soft swampy ground.

A few days' travelling made us realise how rapidly one zone succeeds another, each with its different weather season. On leaving Stanley pool, we had come in for the first violent tornado of the rainy season, and we were now in the middle of a wet zone. A few days more would, however, bring us to the beginning of a region showing the first signs of approaching summer.

The weather was hot and sultry, and on our last day in the Southern Hemisphere the steamer met one thunderstorm after another, the northern horizon being charged with black and threatening clouds. It rained all night without ceasing, and early on the 30th of October we crossed the Equator, and entered the region of the true primeval forest.

During the afternoon the sun at length broke through the clouds, and made up for his long holiday by an unbearably sultry heat. In the clear atmosphere we could appreciate the imposing grandeur and aspect of the forest. The great trees were a hundred and fifty feet and more in height, and stood a foot deep in water. We meant to take a canoe and go in search of specimens, but when we discovered that the whole forest lay under water as far as the eye could reach, we reluctantly gave up the attempt.

We saw more and more native huts belonging to the cannibal Mi-Ssangas. The appearance of a steamer seemed to be an important event for these children of Nature, for young and old lined up on the banks, staring at us with open mouths. The women wore glittering spiral anklets made of iron or brass, whilst their hair was concealed by turban-like cloths. (Illus. 96, 107.) The men wore their hair, and sometimes even their beards, in plaits, which gave them a very droll appearance.

The animal world, too, is more plentifully represented on this side of the Equator. Small communities of monkeys, comprising three or four different varieties, might be seen gambolling in the branches of the gigantic trees that lined the banks. On the approach of the steamer they sought safety in flight, leaping from tree to tree, or disappearing in the jungle. Crocodiles



98. *Papilio antimachus* drinking. $\frac{1}{2}$ natural size.



99. *Papilio antimachus* drinking. $\frac{1}{2}$ natural size.

were sunning themselves on dead trunks that protruded from the water, and a snow-white silver heron sat motionless on a branch, staring into the water. A black rhinoceros-bird flapped noisily across the vessel's path, flocks of grey parrots chattered and screamed, whilst between the trees a large butterfly, the splendid *Papilio zalmoxis* (illus. 122), displayed his gorgeous sky-blue wings, which were reflected in the mirror of the water.

But Nature showed us these cheerful pictures only during the brief intervals between the storms, and our first night in the Northern Hemisphere was the reverse of pleasant. Every possible circumstance combined to increase the humidity of the atmosphere. There was no wind, and the rain poured down at intervals in perpendicular streams. In addition the whole neighbourhood was under water, and the atmosphere was saturated with moisture. Everything felt damp, and although it was not particularly hot, the skin was covered with beads of perspiration. Under such conditions it was impossible to dry anything that had become wet, and we had great difficulty in preserving our collections from mould.

We reached the wood station Likunda on the last day of October, and remained here longer than usual in order to allow of some necessary repairs to the boiler. I met with a trifling adventure, which might have had serious consequences.

The sun having succeeded in breaking through the clouds, I went ashore, accompanied by one of my Cameroon "boys" who, owing to his corpulence, had earned the nickname of "Matabum" (meaning "fatty"). We followed a winding path through the forest. On the way back I went a few yards away

from the path, when suddenly the ground gave way under my feet, and I fell headlong. I heard my "boy" calling "Massa, Massa" in a terrified voice, and realized to my horror that I had fallen into one of the skilfully made pits which the Mi-Ssangas dig in order to trap wild beasts. At first I saw no way of extricating myself, for the pit was quite ten feet deep, and wider at the bottom than at the top, so that when I tried to scramble up the sides I merely succeeded in dragging down the earth on the top of me. But my companion threw himself flat on the ground, and pulled me up with the help of a long stick, although he was so frightened that the tears streamed down his fat cheeks. I myself felt somewhat uncomfortable at the thought of what might have happened supposing I had been alone, and I inwardly congratulated myself on my foresight in never going anywhere in the African bush without a companion.

On the afternoon of the 1st of November we reached the large station of Likilemba, as it is named on the map, or Ikerimba, as it is called by the Mi-Ssangas. It is built on a flat mound of red, sandy mud, about twenty-five feet above the level of the sea. Two Frenchmen, dressed all in white, stood on the landing-stage, awaiting the arrival of the steamer.

The land has been reclaimed for some distance from the forest, apparently for some considerable time. The piety of the Mi-Ssangas towards their dead is a touching trait which they share with many other cannibal tribes. Mildbraed and I walked through the cemetery of Likilemba, and noticed the carefully arranged flat graves in round niches cut out of the herbaceous underwood. On each grave were piled the favourite possessions

of the deceased: specimens of native handicraft, such as skilfully plaited baskets, and also European articles, such as a petroleum lamp, empty jam pots, etc. The women's graves were adorned with their heavy anklets, resembling the spiral springs of a spring mattress. Much care had been bestowed on the chiefs' graves, which were covered with large mounds several yards high. Here and there seats were provided for those visiting the cemetery.

The Europeans in Likilemba showed us an interesting photograph of a gorilla that had been killed in the neighbourhood a few days before; and by the side of which the tall Mi-Ssanga natives looked like dwarfs.

On the 2nd of November we reached Wesso, a large French customs station at the mouth of the Djah (N'goko), which was the destination of our steamer. (Illus. 90.) Our captain kindly permitted us to remain on board until the arrival of the vessel which was to convey us to Molundu.

Wesso (illus. 92), owes its importance to its favourable situation; it lies at the junction of two large navigable rivers (illus. 93), it is well above the high water level of the rainy season, and it has in its neighbourhood productive, agricultural land, from which it is not, like so many villages on the Ssanga and the Djah, cut off by swamps. (Illus. 91.) Industry reigns in these high-lying, fertile plains; big-boned Mi-Ssanga women, dripping with oil, clatter along in their bracelets and anklets, carrying on their backs heavy baskets loaded with bananas or evil-smelling manioc roots. Opposite Wesso, on the left bank of the Ssanga, stretches a vast, inhospitable swamp, impassable during the rainy season excepting with

the help of a canoe, or by skilful leaps from one tree-root to another. (Illus. 97.)

It was in just such a spot, at the edge of a lagoon, that I secured a specimen of the largest of all African butterflies, the gigantic *Papilio antimachus*. We had already noticed this prince of butterflies from the steamer, below Likilemba; it flew like a bird over the huts of a village, and its outstretched wings measured nearly a foot from one tip to the other. Here, on the edge of the lagoon, I had the unexpected good fortune to net a specimen of this coveted butterfly as it alighted to quench its thirst. The enthusiastic zoologist will sympathise with my elation as I took the gigantic insect out of my net. The first known specimen was for a hundred years the only one of its kind, and the greatest treasure of an English collection, until sixty years ago a second example was brought to Europe. I had, moreover, the satisfaction of observing other specimens at the same spot, and taking photographs of them, which are quite unique. (Illus. 98, 99.)

Meanwhile the flat-bottomed screw-steamer "de Brazza," which was to convey to us Molundu, had arrived from the French station N'goila on the Djah. Its grand designation, "Vapeur à deux hélices" in the time-table of the French "Messageries fluviales" had given us quite a wrong impression, and we were somewhat disappointed when we went on board and were introduced to the young Danish captain, to find that it was by no means in its first youth, and that almost all the conveniences of the "Commandant Lamy" were wanting.

Early on the 7th of November the "de Brazza" started up-stream, heavily laden with men and baggage,



100. Pygmy settlement on the Djah.



101. Gathering tornado.

and towing two ponderous lighters, one on each side. We abandoned ourselves to various pessimistic calculations as to the speed and duration of the voyage. Opposite the mouth of the Djah the current was so powerful that not only did the vessel not advance, but she was actually driven back until the captain decided to hug the bank, where the straining engine was able to make headway.

There were no cabins on the "de Brazza," excepting the captain's, and the only protection against the weather was an awning on the upper deck. Considering our snail's pace, and the fact that all meteorical tables notwithstanding, the rain continued to fall in torrents, we did not anticipate a very agreeable voyage. There were eight European passengers, and we accommodated ourselves as best we could on the upper deck, which was only about thirty yards square, though it had to serve as sitting-room, dining-room, and bedroom. Part of it was occupied by luggage, and at night considerable ingenuity was required in order to make up our beds under that part of the roof which was still water-tight.

Our conversation was both interesting and varied, for most of us had seen a good deal of the world. There was a tall, weather-beaten looking gentleman who had been an officer in Algiers, and was now going out as india-rubber agent for a French company. I had already met him in Brazzaville, where he was diligently studying a small book which contained instructions for distinguishing the india-rubber plant from the cocoa and other nut trees. Another man had hunted at Fontainebleau in his youth, so he played merry fanfares on a hunting horn, awakening the echoes of the green forest wall on the bank.

Two of the passengers got off at the French station N'gali, which is situated in the midst of splendid india-rubber plantations. This gave the rest of us a little more breathing space and room to move about.

On the morning of the 9th of November we started very early in order to reach Molundu the same evening. In the afternoon we caught sight of the low leaf huts of the first representatives of the Pygmies (illus. 100), with whom we were to have so much to do during the ensuing weeks.

It was dark by the time our siren announced our arrival to the inhabitants of Molundu. (Illus. 94). Standing on the half-submerged landing-stage we saw the government physician, Dr Hauboldt, who had been our fellow-passenger on the voyage from Hamburg to Stanley pool.

CHAPTER XX

RESEARCH WORK IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF MOLUNDU

A ROOMY "guest-house" was placed at our disposal for the time that we proposed to spend in Molundu. This house was made almost entirely of the gigantic fronds of the raphia palm, and was the first of the new buildings to be completed.

Molundu is a station built on a slightly undulating plain, on which the trees have been cut down and replaced by banana and cassada plantations, which provide work for the numerous convicts brought from all parts of the colony. In the clearances a few isolated forest giants have been left standing, also some india-rubber trees, *Kickxia elastica*. Young oil palms have been planted by the road-side, for these trees do not grow wild in any part of the south-east Cameroons forest. The Mi-Ssangas willingly pay ten shillings per litre for the highly prized palm-oil, so that a good-sized plantation of oil palms would be a rich source of profit to the inhabitants of the station.

At the time of our visit the village was flooded, and the adjoining native village was cut off from the station by a deep stream, so that all communication had to be carried on in canoes.

We proceeded by water to visit the various European settlers, the oldest of whom was a gentleman called

de Cuvry, the founder of the South Cameroon Company. In the early days of European colonization he had lived amongst the cannibal tribes of this country, and could tell us all about the ancient customs of the Mi-Ssangas, the N'dzimus, the Kunabembes, and the Bangandus, customs that were formerly practised openly before Europeans, but nowadays only in secret.

Travelling by canoe we found the most agreeable means of progression that had as yet fallen to our lot in Africa. The long, slender craft, propelled by six to eight sturdy Mi-Ssanga rowers, shot like an arrow over the water, and we were astonished at the graceful precision and endurance of these natives, who worked standing. The women were particularly skilful, and the manipulation of the long oars showed off their supple brown bodies to perfection. (Illus. 95.) We passed the bridge, resting on piles thirty feet high, which spans the little Lupi River, as it flows into the Djah, immediately below the Bumba. The river was up to the planks of the bridge, and the European cemetery close by lay under water, so that only the tops of the tombstones were visible.

So far there seemed little prospect of any improvement in the weather, and the available meteorological tables proved that observations extending over many years are required in order to give results that are in any way reliable. During November very little rain is supposed to fall, and yet here we were getting drenched every time we set out to collect specimens, and the rain-gauge indicated over eight inches for the month. In December, although the month was ushered in by thunderstorms, we seemed to be passing through a transition period, and it was not until the end of January that the dry season set in for good.



102. Interior of a Basanga house.



103. Village street of Molunda with fowl-house.



104. Basanga women cooking.



105. Basanga women at their toilet.

These irregularities in the weather were not, however, so surprising as those that we had experienced near Tibundi, including numerous thunderstorms. They manifested themselves generally in the early morning, when the thermometer was comparatively low, and a thick fog enveloped the landscape. Towards noon the fog dispersed, but the sky remained overcast, and the sun seldom succeeded in breaking through the clouds.

In the early morning of the 8th of December one of these curious "fog thunderstorms" overtook us at Molundu. The previous day the atmosphere had become more and more foggy, and though there were no typical thunderclouds to be seen, yet the entire sky was overcast, and thunder could be heard muttering in the distance.

Towards sunset the clouds dispersed, but the electrical tension had not been wholly discharged. Between eight and nine o'clock the night was bright and starry, but the air was still oppressively sultry. There was not a cloud in the sky, for the stars on the horizon were plainly visible, whilst those overhead shone with unusual brilliance, as on a starry winter's night at home. Towards morning the temperature dropped so that I was able to slip into my pyjamas, and at last it became so cold that I even drew up my blanket. I was not mistaken in supposing that it was foggy out-of-doors, and if the windows had been open the mist would certainly have penetrated into my bedroom. Instead of growing lighter the darkness increased, and amid this strange semi-twilight the thunderstorm broke. The fog did not disperse, and there was no sign of a thunder-cloud. I can only explain this phenomenon by supposing that we were in the very

centre of the thunder-cloud, though the low altitude of Molundu renders this improbable.

Owing to the wet weather the country around Molundu was almost impassable, and the field of our labours was closely restricted. Half an hour's walk in an easterly direction brought us to a swamp, and the road leading from the station to a large factory on the Bumba, which would have been the most favourable spot for collecting, was blocked close to the station owing to the fact that the second bridge over the Lupi was up to the railings in water.

This prolonged inundation occasioned a marked dearth of flowers as well as of animals, and our botanist was bitterly disappointed. Nevertheless, everything was unmistakably awakening to new life. Many of the trees were in full flower, amongst them the beautiful "African maple" with its charming purple and white striped blossoms. The renewed activity of insect life also bore witness to the fact that the quiescent period was at an end. Iridescentbeetles crawled about the bare branches of fallen trees, sparkling like emeralds in the sunlight. Clouds of little brown-black butterflies, *Libythea labdaca*, frequented the banks of the rivers and other damp places, alighting even on our persons, or forming dark patches on the ground. Another butterfly, the white *Cymothoe caenis*, presented a spectacle similar to that of the locust swarms on the plains. A flight composed entirely of male butterflies passed over the station during the morning of the 12th of November coming from the East, and disappearing over the river into the forest. It resembled a snowstorm, and coming into view at about nine o'clock, continued until noon, the last straggler passing at about one o'clock.

Still more impressive was another insect invasion which occurred one night, and which is included among the experiences of anyone who has been for any length of time in the African tropics. On the evening in question I had got everything ready for developing photographs in my tent, when I noticed one of our "boys" wandering about with a torch. I asked him what was the matter, and he replied: "Ants, Massa, ants!" When a negro raises the cry of ants at night in the forest, he refers to "driver ants," and the dreaded name will alarm the whole village. I recalled all the horrors of an "ant night" in the Cross River district, and with a foreboding of evil I rushed into my room. I heard the sinister hum of their wings, and by the light of the lamp I saw that the walls, floor, and ceiling were black with ants. The space between our house and that of the "boys" was swarming with ants, the adjoining plantation was swarming with ants; everything was black and seemed to move. They had evidently been attracted to our dwelling by the numerous cockroaches, and we attacked them with burning petroleum and naphthaline.

A scene of wild excitement ensued. All the spiders, lizards, and above all, the cockroaches, sought safety in flight, and the "boys" screamed whenever they were bitten. Our combined efforts succeeded in diverting the main attack in another direction. The infuriated insects clung for some time to the roof, hanging in bunches to the palm fronds of which it was composed, and dropping one by one to the ground. Woe betide the unwary individual who received an ant in his neck! The foggy weather eventually drove away the ants, and ranging themselves in a column

three inches wide, the black host went on its way. A few scattered divisions remained in our neighbourhood, which we proceeded to clear of weeds, in order to deprive these unwelcome guests of their commissariat.

There was a curious sequel to this nocturnal visitation. A few days later I noticed in my room a horrible smell which seemed to come from under the flooring. On removing the boards, I found a large, living, poisonous snake, and the dead bodies of three others, which had apparently fallen victims to the driver ant. Sooner or later these insects kill everything they come across, even large animals that are unable to get away. Fowls, goats, and sheep, shut up in a shed are doomed unless their owners succeed in diverting the line of march of the ants.

Birds were very plentiful in the forest surrounding Molundu. Five or six varieties of large rhinoceros birds fluttered from tree to tree; many-hued parrots and green doves plundered the wild fig-trees, and flocks of twittering bee-eaters circled like swallows in the air. Variegated shrikes hopped about in the underwood, and the scarlet cups of the flowering *spathodea* were surrounded by iridescent sun-birds, the most charming of all African sun-birds. A *kickxia* grew in front of our house, and its branches were covered with weaver-birds' nests, in which we could sometimes distinguish the golden plumage of the occupant. There were hundreds of these birds, and they were so noisy that it was often impossible to do any work. A gun fired out of the window silenced the twittering for a few minutes, but it soon began again with renewed vigour.

Of the forest animals, mammals are the least often seen. It is not that they are rare, but the forest

affords them so secure a hiding-place that even the natives find it difficult to track them. Consequently the most enthusiastic hunter very seldom gets any reward for his pains, and must be prepared to spend days and even weeks in the pursuit of big game.

There are, however, a few spots in the forest which are frequented by wild beasts of all kinds. These are the so-called "grass-fields": open spaces in the midst of the jungle. It was here that the native hunters found the new specimens of ruminants which they brought to us in Molundu, often after many days' fruitless hunting. These were small tufted antelopes, and on one occasion, a large red buffalo, which had paid an early morning visit to the plantations belonging to the station.

The most interesting varieties of animals can be found only in the densest part of the jungle, for instance the little musk-deer, and sleepy semi-apes that live in the thickest branches of the trees, and come out only by night, when their plaintive cry may be heard. Here, too, is the abode of the rare flying squirrel.

But by far the most interesting inhabitant of this district is the mighty gorilla, the sinister hermit of these melancholy forest solitudes. In all the villages there are stories of his strange habits, of fierce fights, and of attacks on solitary travellers, truth and fable being inextricably confused. But one can make allowance for a good many inventions after examining the skull of one of these creatures, with its powerful wild-beast jaw. The persistent assertion of the Congo natives that the gorilla carries off women is probably untrue, but many other narratives cannot be set aside, since they are unanimously upheld by all the South Cameroon tribes, and the details are so

realistic that it is difficult not to believe them. It must also be admitted that there is probably a foundation of truth in the fantastic stories told by du Chaillu.

The natives all agree that the gorilla prefers to live in an *afromomum* jungle, and that its red fruit constitutes his chief food. I was further assured that he remains on the ground almost entirely, and has often been seen making use of roads and paths constructed by man.

The evidence as to whether he makes a nest is conflicting. I am inclined to think that this depends on the individual inclination of the animal, as is the case with the chimpanzee. I gathered from the accounts of the natives that it is only the females and young gorillas that live in a kind of shelter made of branches and perched in the fork of a tree. The males are said to sleep on the ground on a bed of leaves, leaning against a thick tree-trunk. Judging by my own observations later on, this version seems to me to be probably the most correct.

All my black informants likewise agreed that solitary male gorillas will attack a traveller unprovoked, but they are generally intimidated if their adversary brandishes some shining object, such as a hunting knife.

On the whole, gorilla hunting was described to me as a highly dangerous pastime, and the chief difficulty seems to be to await the right moment for shooting. When the gorilla catches sight of the hunter, he sways from one foot to the other, at the same time roaring and trying to frighten away his enemy by brandishing his long arms. This is not the time to shoot, for his movements are so rapid and violent that it is impossible



Skizze 2.
Hii-Langhe-
Tanz
Holmud.
Jan. 11.



Skizze 2.
Hii-Langhe-
Tanz

Holmud.
Jan. 11.

Schultze



Skizze 2.
Hii-Langhe-
Tanz

Holmud.
Jan. 11.



Skizze 2.
Hii-Langhe-
Tanz

Holmud.
Jan. 11.

Schultze



107. Basanga maidens.



108. Basanga dancer.

to take correct aim. The gorilla then rushes at the hunter, and now is the best time to shoot him in the chest. But I can hardly believe that the natives have the courage to wait until the animal charges them, for to my mind this must require nerves of steel.

A native of Gaboon, named Undene, who was at one time my orderly, related to me the following adventure which befell him when he was in charge of the little station N'gato, in the jungle north of Molundu. On the main road he twice shot two large male gorillas, and it was in connection with the first of these adventures that he related to me the following story.

He found the animal, a powerful male, leaning against a tree trunk, sound asleep, and shot it without killing it. The gorilla charged his assailant with lightning speed, and seizing his gun with one hand endeavoured to carry it to its mouth in order to bite it up. With the other hand it grasped its opponent's leg so as to throw him down. With great difficulty Undene managed to reload, but in his terror he missed the ape, who was still holding on to the muzzle of the gun. At last he succeeded in reloading once more, and this time shot the animal in the breast and killed it. During the struggle the animal kept up a mighty roar. One thing is evident: gorilla hunting takes place at close quarters, and calls for rapid action, combined with the utmost coolness.

The smaller, long-tailed monkeys and the beautiful black *colobus*, with its handsome white, silky frill and tail, are much commoner than their large relative, and are in fact more plentiful than any other mammal. They leap wildly from tree to tree, and the rustling of the branches attracts the traveller's attention,

though he can catch only a momentary glimpse of the acrobat.

Soon after our arrival in Molundu we heard that owing to the difficulty of obtaining bearers in this district, the Buea authorities were sending us from the Ebolowa country a caravan of a hundred and fifty men. This would have been a great help if we had intended to travel rapidly in the direction of the coast, but as we proposed to proceed as slowly as possible through thinly populated districts offering special facilities for collecting zoological and botanical specimens, we began to wonder how we could possibly feed such an army of bearers.

On the 3rd of December a messenger arrived from Lieutenant Edler von der Planitz, the leader of the caravan, begging us to send boats to fetch the men from the Dongo rapids, about forty miles above Molundu. This the energetic governor of the station at once agreed to do, and the very same day he set off up stream with a flotilla of canoes, manned by the best Mi-Ssanga rowers, both men and women. Ten days later he returned to Molundu, accompanied by the leader of the caravan, who related that he and his men had had a most fatiguing march via Missum-Missum and Eta, and that by the time they reached the Dongo rapids their provisions were exhausted, so that the relief party under Herr Koch was most welcome. They had not been able to bring all the bearers by water, as the additional canoes which Herr Koch had hoped to pick up at some of the villages on the way, were absent from home. But he succeeded in shooting a hippopotamus and a large crocodile, and thus supplied the men with meat. Two days later the rest of the bearers reached Molundu, and the

excellent condition of all the men bore witness to the careful management of their leader.

Our doubts as to what we should do with all these men were resolved by the lieutenant's account of his experiences, which left us no hesitation as to the best course to pursue. The provisioning of his caravan had been accomplished only by loading most of the men with supplies of rice and stock fish, so we made up our minds to take only fifty-five of the strongest of the bearers, and to send back the remainder before Christmas in charge of Lieutenant von der Planitz.

There was a large party for our Christmas celebrations, including several "rubber lions," this being an ironical nickname for the South Cameroon traders. As is always the case in the tropics, we missed the true Christmas spirit, inseparable as it is from the odour of fir-trees and wintry weather. But we made the warm still night resound with Christmas carols as we stood round our Christmas tree that glittered with lighted tapers.

Just about Christmas time the weather was particularly sultry, although the heat was relieved at intervals by typical tropical tornadoes, that came up from the East with marvellous rapidity, driving before them a cloud of swirling leaves, and darkening the sky until the tree trunks showed white against the background of inky clouds. (Illus. 101.) In spite of the frequent downpours, the flooded fields began to dry up, exhaling foul miasmas. Before the end of the year the Djah had fallen twelve feet, and both bridges over the Lupi were passable once more; the forest swamps and morasses, however, took much longer to dry up.

Now that we were supplied with bearers, there was no further obstacle to our journey north. We had

planned to travel by easy stages to Yukaduma, and thence, after making a short digression into the grassy plains, to proceed due west towards the coast. Further, we had decided that one of us should always remain two or three days' march behind the other, each travelling with his own baggage. By this means, whilst waiting for the bearers to return and take up the baggage of the second man, we should both of us have time to explore the neighbourhood of each camping ground. This plan had, of course, the disadvantage of obliging the bearers to traverse each stage three times.

Mildbraed set out on one of the last days of the old year, and proceeded to N'ginda in the Bangandu district, which he had already explored early in November. He was disappointed on reaching the mouth of the Boke River, this neighbourhood having been described to him as a most promising field for botanical research. He found nothing but a barren swamp, infested with tsetse flies, which made it almost impossible to do any work.

Mildbraed was able to prolong his first stage, as I still had a great deal of ethnological work to do in Molundu. I had a long list of about a thousand questions to be answered, entrusted to me by the Hamburg ethnological museum, and which involved more work than I had anticipated. Several hours, and sometimes even a whole day, were required to obtain accurate answers to some of these questions, especially those regarding abstract subjects, although Herr Koch, with his wide knowledge of his subordinates, was of great assistance to me.

I had consequently but little time for any other research work, and I was forced to be content with

the zoological specimens brought me by my "boys," many of which proved most interesting. I have a vivid recollection of the occasion when one of the natives brought in a hooded snake six feet in length, *Naja melanoleuca*, one of the most venomous of African reptiles. Its head was held in a forked branch, and there were some highly exciting moments while we endeavoured to get it into a large jar of alcohol. At length my Togo cook, with the most disconcerting coolness, succeeded in killing the dangerous creature in spite of its struggles.

My ethnological studies necessitated considerable physical exertion, including long walks to the native villages, and visits to distant farms and forest clearances, where the large trunks destined for canoe building were being hollowed out. Perhaps the most exhausting work took place in the hot, stuffy bark houses (illus. 102), long and low, and which were certainly not violet-scented. Here I spent many hours sketching, or endeavouring, often unsuccessfully, to extract from an old "medicine man" his jealously guarded secrets. Meanwhile the rain rattled on the roof, and the thick, stinging smoke, for which there was no outlet, brought the tears to my eyes and choked my lungs. And yet I have many pleasant recollections of the hours spent in these cannibal villages, sketch-book in hand, watching the natives, busy at their various employments, or listening to their narratives which betrayed a strange mixture of truth and naïve superstition.

Many of the latter recalled similar beliefs that I had come across at home, for instance, that the hooting of an owl is an omen of death. Other superstitions, no less remarkable, explain the occasionally mysterious behaviour of the natives. Their deeply-rooted terror

of Europeans may be attributed mainly to the belief that the white men are ghosts, souls of departed Mi-Ssangas, returned to life in a new guise. Many supernatural powers are ascribed to us, and this idea is nearly related to the belief that albinos are omniscient "medicine men."

It is very difficult to obtain accurate information regarding cannibalism, which is still occasionally practised in secret, but upon which severe penalties are imposed by the European authorities. Many customs are so deeply rooted that they resist for a long time the influence of civilization. Herr Koch's small "boy," who bore the proud name of "Commandant," had so far lapsed from the traditions of his race that he looked down upon the people of his own village with the utmost contempt, and showed no compunction in addressing the old men as "You nigger!" Yet he was not to be dissuaded from the disfiguring custom of sharpening the teeth, and one day he had his splendid teeth filed to a point. A Mi-Ssanga's idea of beauty will not permit him to leave his teeth in their natural condition.

Like all negroes, the Mi-Ssangas displayed their emotions principally in dancing, and I received the best impression of their feelings and thoughts on the occasion of a dancing festival held in honour of a deceased woman.

These festivities took place in the broad street of the village of Molundu, and began soon after sunset. We had scarcely taken our places on our camp stools, when by the dim light of a wood fire, the audience, comprising almost all the villagers, arranged themselves in a large semi-circle, leaving a space free for dancing. The orchestra consisted of two drums, and a few notched

sticks which were drawn like violin bows across another piece of wood ; in addition there was the hand-clapping of the audience, and the jingling of the women's anklets. The dancing displayed marvellous activity and grace, and was executed mostly by women, alone or in pairs. Frenzied movements from the hips, showing wonderful elasticity and suppleness, were the most striking part of all the dances. The children also joined in the dancing, and displayed the same grace and suppleness as their elders.

After a time the semi-circle of spectators and musicians opened to admit a startling apparition, which was greeted with enthusiastic applause. A woman stepped into the circle of light formed by the flickering fire ; she was slim, and perhaps somewhat withered, but her body was whitened with kaolin, and her coquettish dress made her look younger than she really was. (Illus. 108.) She was clothed in a short skirt composed of a number of raphia fibres, bunched out, and looking something like the dress of a ballet dancer. On her head she wore an erection of feathers, and round her legs strings of fruit stones rattled as she moved. A number of bracelets and anklets completed her attire, which was most attractive, harmonizing perfectly with her surroundings. Then began a dance, or rather a series of dance figures, which in grace and frenzied rapidity of movements far surpassed anything that we had yet witnessed. (Illus. 106.) The Mi-Ssangas, men and women alike, watched the performance with glowing eyes, applauding enthusiastically after each dance. The dancer was soon bathed in perspiration, but she danced on indefatigably, introducing new figures, whilst the applause grew ever louder, and the drums kept up a deafening din. It was midnight

when we retired, after rewarding the chief performers, but all night long the noise continued, ceasing only with the approach of dawn.

The Pygmies were the most interesting people whose acquaintance I made in Molundu; we had noticed them in a dark corner of the jungle on the banks of the Djah, as we passed in the steamer. Ebayeggas, or Bayeas, they call themselves, whilst the Congo natives call them Bomanyoks, or elephant hunters. It was a long time before I came into closer contact with these dwarfs, for they spend their time following elephant tracks up and down the jungle.

I paid a visit one day to the abandoned dwellings of these jungle gipsies, not far from Molundu. It had been occupied by the tribe which was in the habit of supplying the villagers of Molundu with elephant meat. There exists a kind of mutual compact between the Bantus on the one hand, and the Pygmies on the other, whereby the latter are supplied by the former with fruit, hunting weapons, and various indispensable trifles, in return for which they give up some of the coveted elephant meat and ivory. There is no question of the dwarfs being in subjection to the other tribes, as some travellers have asserted. The Pygmies are fully aware of their importance as providers of meat, and it matters little to them which villages they supply, since they are never in danger of cannibal attacks by the inhabitants. There is such mutual confidence between the Pygmies and the other native tribes, that the former readily believe the horrors that are related to them in connection with Europeans. This explains the timidity of the Bomanyoks towards white men, which is fostered by the cunning Bantus in their



109. Pygmy settlement near Molundu.



110. Pygmy playing on the xylophone.



111. Pygmies from the neighbourhood of Molundu.



112. Pygmy women.

anxiety to keep the ivory and india-rubber trade in their own hands.

In the abandoned Pygmy settlement I could examine at my leisure the peculiar construction of these primitive semi-circular huts, hidden away in the dark recesses of the forest. (Illus. 109, 110.) Their shape reminded me of the "pontoks" of the South African tribes: huts barely six feet in height, formed of sticks bent in a semi-circle with both ends sunk in the ground, and roofed with large *phrynium* leaves. (Illus. 134.) Later on, when we camped in the forest, my bearers often constructed similar huts in a very short time, affording an efficient shelter against the inclemencies of the weather.

At last, as the water began to dry up, bringing the elephants nearer to the rivers, I received one day the welcome news that the Pygmies were returning. The chieftain of Molundu introduced me to two Ebayeggas; they were certainly short of stature, but in other respects showed few of the characteristics of a dwarf race. I soon succeeded in dispelling their distrust, and in learning from them a few sentences which seemed to me indispensable for my proposed visit to their new settlement.

The first time I visited their huts, the result of my approach was just what I had anticipated. Although I had given notice of my visit, every man, woman, and child slipped noiselessly into the adjoining jungle before I came even into sight, and the breaking of a twig alone notified the direction in which the last Pygmy had taken flight. But when I shouted after them one of the words that I had learned: "Mokbea" (do not be afraid!) they gradually returned, first the men, then the older women, and finally, though with

some hesitation, the young women with their babies in their arms, followed by their children. It was not until I had paid them several visits that they trusted me entirely, and eventually no one took to flight when they saw me approaching.

Most of the Pygmies that I now saw fully confirmed my preconceived notions as to their appearance. (Illus. 111, 112.) The men were small, stunted, and muscular, with a yellow-brown skin, large, wide-set eyes, bushy eye-brows, big fleshy noses, and very long arms. I was specially struck by their prominent brows and protruding mouth with its thin lips. (Illus. 115.) A few individuals, both men and women, were unusually hairy, and one man, with a great mane and long beard, might easily have been taken for an Australian aborigine. (Illus. 113.)

The features of the Pygmies were not nearly so coarse as I had expected, and though many of them were decidedly ugly, some of them, especially the women, had expressive, almost pretty faces. I was puzzled by the sight of a few individuals who were much taller, or were darker in colour, or else possessed typical negro lips. I asked my Mi-Ssanga guide whether there was any intermarriage between his tribe and the Pygmies, but he assured me that this never occurred, and that if a Mi-Ssanga man were to demean himself so far as to fall in love with a Pygmy woman, he would make himself a laughing-stock among his own people, and would be despised by the women-folk. Later on, however, he admitted to me "under the seal of secrecy" that during a hunting expedition which kept him away from home for many weeks, and forced him to live for some time with the Bomanyoks, he had departed from the good customs of his tribe.

By the end of January I was so far advanced with my ethnological studies that I could think about following Mildbraed, and it was with a sigh of relief that I placed a full stop at the end of the last answer to the last question. More than thirty large packing cases full of ethnological, zoological, and botanical specimens, the result of three months' hard work, were despatched by steamer to the Congo, and on the 28th of January I took leave of the residents of Molundu, who had extended their hospitality to me for nearly a quarter of a year. For the last time I crossed the familiar bridge over the Lupi, now reduced to a tiny stream, and then I set forth on my travels, along the wide caravan road leading towards the North.

CHAPTER XXI

ON THE ROAD TO YUKADUMA

It is strange how hard it is to eradicate geographical errors, when once they have obtained credence in scientific circles. One of these errors which is obstinately retained in otherwise trustworthy geographical books, is the assertion that in the African tropics there are no great primeval forests, such as occur in northern South America and in the Malay peninsula.

When Stanley published his graphic descriptions of the great forests of the Aruwimi, there was not a single scientist who believed the statements of the "American reporter." How was it possible, they argued, that these descriptions could be true, when explorers such as Schweinfurth, Pogge, and Wissmann, who were familiar with the Congo basin in the Southern hemisphere, never alluded to any such forests in equatorial Africa, and spoke only of savannahs with narrow wooded belts and isolated forest glades?

And yet there is a great primeval forest in Africa, far more comprehensive than the South American *Hylea* and possessing the same perplexing luxuriance of lianas, ferns, and epiphytes. It contains the rotang palms of the Malay forest; its giant trees are equal to those of any other tropical jungle in height as well as in the extravagance of their root formation; the fronds of its raphia palms are longer than those of any other palms in the world;

in short, this forest combines in the highest degree all that it is possible to imagine in the way of tropical variety and luxuriance.

The traveller who has seen the African forest only from the steamer would gain a very different impression if he were to force his way inland through the pathless jungle. Beside the rivers the conditions of plant life are always identical, and except for the recently cultivated tracts, the vegetation of the banks, in spite of its grandeur, is wearisome in its monotony. I could well understand Mildbraed's satisfaction when, two or three miles from Molundu, he came to higher ground and left the swamp-land behind.

This part of the forest is interrupted at intervals by clearances which have been made for agricultural purposes, and which permit the isolated trees left standing to develop to their full extent. The foggy weather which persisted for several days made the gigantic trees seem even larger than they were in reality. The imposing appearance of their huge trunks, a hundred and fifty feet or more in height, is enhanced by the presence of the dense *Phrynium* and *Maranthen* undergrowth (belonging to the same family as the ginger and the red-flowering *Canna indica*), which grows to a height of fifteen to twenty feet. Each individual tree shows to advantage, and the bizarre elk-horn ferns (*Platy-cerium* together with the long bunches of *Angrecum* and other tree orchids hanging down from the branches, give a deceptive appearance of virginity.

The lianas, too, are better developed and in greater variety than I have seen elsewhere. I observed a particularly striking leguminous climbing plant, in the form of a wooden rope of the thickness of one's finger, which winds itself spirally round a branch or

trunk, and then stretches, like a huge corkscrew, to the next available tree, the queerest caricature of the vegetable world that can be imagined.

Among the forest giants the *Kickxias*, or india-rubber trees, grow in great profusion, and the numerous incisions, some old and some recent, in their smooth silver-grey trunks, call attention to the product which is the sole source of the present importance of the South Cameroons. Other tall trees with dense foliage, whose little dark-green leaves recalled those of the box tree, were pointed out to me by Musa, my Kunabambe "boy," as the important Peki tree (*Irvingia gabonensis*) whose fruit, like that of the *Mimusops djave*, supplies the natives of this district with a vegetable fat, which to a certain extent, takes the place of palm-oil.

There are many interesting things to be seen in the underwood, and the sense of smell is often very useful, although the odours that assail the fastidious nose of the European in the musty jungle are not always pleasant.

On my first day's march after leaving Molundu, I repeatedly noticed a horrible, putrid smell, which I had observed also during former excursions in the jungle. I followed it up, and in a dark corner, growing on a heap of vegetable refuse, I found a whole colony of the most extraordinary fungus that I have ever seen. From the head of each fungus grew a delicate snow-white, reticulate bell, with perfectly regular, octagonal meshes. (Illus. 116.) This fungus formed the most charming picture imaginable, but woe betide anyone who approached too near it! Swarms of carrion flies buzzed around, and the odour that it exhaled was so overpowering that even my "boys" held their noses. The carrier of my



113. Pygmy.

×



114. Elk-horn fern (*Platycerium*) on a tree-stem.



115. Bangandu and two pygmies.

photographic apparatus stood for a short time beside it, so that I was able to take a photograph with an exposure of forty seconds.

I know of nothing that tends to develop one's powers of observation like prolonged travelling in the jungle. The eye soon grows accustomed to the perpetual semi-twilight, and discovers a wealth of living things such as can be found nowhere else in the world. It is not exciting big-game hunting that provides occupation for the traveller who explores the jungle, and anyone whose interest centres only in sport had better keep away, or he will certainly be disappointed. But for any one who appreciates the marvellous biological phenomena of the lesser animal world, the tropical forest offers supreme delights. He will never tire of watching the wonderful African birds ; the powerful rhinoceros-bird, with its noisy flight ; the beautiful blue *turacou*, and many other winged creatures that fill the groves with their song. Still more fascinating is the insect world, whose bright colours compensate the dearth of flowers.

The butterflies are specially noteworthy, not only on account of their brilliant colouring, but because of their peculiar habits. They settle upon any decaying fruit that may have fallen to the ground. (Illus. 119, 121.) Eagerly feeding, they lose all timidity, so that I could approach and observe the wonderful mosaic on the under surface of their wings.

Besides these gaudy creatures, there are other insects in greater numbers than is altogether pleasant for the traveller. Numerous representatives of the ant tribe, for instance, give unmistakable evidence of their presence. There are the driver ants, a swarm of which had attacked us at the beginning of our overland

journey. There is also the vicious black *Sima aethiops*, living in the hollow branches of the *Barteria fistulosa*, and feeding on its foliage. Anyone who has accidentally stumbled against a branch of the *Barteria* will be careful not to do so again, and our carriers always made a respectful detour when they caught sight of this plant with its unpleasant guests. Mildbraed suffered much from ants in the course of his botanical work, and he complained that even the highest branches of the *Barteria*, which he shot down, were swarming with these insects.

On reaching the higher and drier country within a day's march of Molundu, we entered the territory inhabited by the Bangandus, an interesting Soudanese tribe which has retained its political independence in the midst of the Mi-Ssangas, N'dzimus, Kunabembes, and other Congo races. If I had not been warned of their presence, I should certainly have failed to discover that I was now in the midst of another race, for the Bangandus have faithfully adopted most of the customs of the surrounding tribes.

Anyone attempting to draw definite conclusions from observations among the Bangandus, as for example with regard to the distribution and origin of their various weapons, would soon be at a loss. The boundaries limiting the use of the various javelins, so important for the ethnographer, have now almost disappeared. This is indirectly owing to the india-rubber trade, the Haussas, those shrewd Jewish traders from the Soudan, having quickly realized that they, too, might get some profit from india-rubber. I was therefore not surprised to find a small Hausa colony as far south as Kinshassa, near Stanley pool. On my way north I constantly met Haussas, usually man

and wife, heavily laden with wares for exchange. Anyone who realizes the extent of the influence exerted by the Haussas, will understand how the disappearance of all racial boundaries is thus eventually brought about.

In the ideally situated village of Limbi we came across a curious arrangement. The long axis of this village is at right angles to the main road, and its only entrance is through a building about thirty feet wide, provided on each side with an alcove, and intended to accommodate women only. (Illus. 117.) I ascertained, however, that this is a purely local arrangement, by no means universal. It was not until I had left the last Bangandu village that I was in a position to record the manners and customs of these people, for in every hamlet I found something that I had never seen before.

I noticed everywhere that the inhabitants took pains to make their villages as comfortable as possible. (Illus. 124.)

The large settlement at N'ginda, where I spent five days, supplied me with most of the models for my ethnographical drawings, especially with regard to the ironwork, which is an important industry of the Bangandus. The dearth of raw material obliges them to use imported pig-iron, with which they manufacture iron implements with the help of a hammer and double bellows.

But if the Bangandus have taught the natives of the surrounding tribes how to make hardware, they in their turn have learnt from their neighbours the art of weaving. The simple apparatus by means of which beautiful, thick stuffs are made is worked only by the men, and resembles in principle the classical loom

of the ancients. (Illus. 128.) The raw material is a fine and soft, though tough bast, obtained from the leaf fibres of the raphia palm, one of the most useful jungle trees. Close to the N'ginda is a stream surrounded by extensive raphia swamps, so I took the opportunity of making accurate measurements of the fronds, concerning the length of which I had heard the most diverse estimates. I offered a reward for the longest frond; my "boys" scattered themselves in the swamp, and soon returned bearing huge leaves, each of which required two or three men to carry it. None measured less than fifty feet, while the largest was sixty-four feet in length. (Illus 118.)

On the 2nd of February I left N'ginda, marching in the shade of a splendid forest of tall trees, amongst which were many flowering *Monodoras*. This tree, when in blossom, cannot be passed by unnoticed, for the strong scent diffused by the large orchid-like flowers calls the traveller's attention to their presence. It is the sweetest floral perfume that I have ever come across, but like all scents is difficult to describe. If it could be extracted it would certainly afford a delightfully fragrant perfume.

I was interested to see how frequently and how suddenly the jungle changed its character. Near the little village of Odjimo there are wide stretches covered with the stately *Macrolobium Dewevrei*. Probably some special conditions favour the growth of this particular tree, but apparently the dryness or moisture of the soil have nothing to do with it. There is something very restful and imposing about this forest of great, regular trunks, with the scanty underwood, the almost complete absence of lianas, and the smooth carpet of fallen leaves. It reminded me somewhat



116. Drooping net fungus (*Dictyophora*).



117. Women's house in a Bangandu village.



118. Raffia plume, over 22 yards long, near Nginda.



120



121

122



123

119. *Charaxes* on leopard's dung. 120. Swallowtails. 121. *Charaxes castor*. 122. *Papilio nireus*, and *Zalmoxis*, drinking.
123. *Goliathus giganteus* on *Vernonia*.

of a forest of oaks, although on closer examination the huge pentate leaves dispelled the illusion.

We spent a restless night at Odjimo. One of my men, whom I had sent out to hunt antelopes, declared that at nightfall he had been attacked by a gorilla, and that he had wounded it. Some of the bearers set out in search of the animal with lanterns and torches, but returned empty-handed after a prolonged absence. Meanwhile an army of driver ants had taken possession of their deserted quarters. The result was a nocturnal "ant-fight," which excited the whole village, and it was long after midnight before the vicious insects beat a retreat.

Our next stopping-place was the large village Djimbuli-Mapo, the importance of which is evidenced by the presence of four "banyos," as the block-houses built of durable little tree trunks are called. These solid forts are skilfully erected on rising ground, so that through the loop-holes the entire village street can be swept with rifle fire. A gigantic *Albizzia*, the curiosity of the place, was about two hundred feet high, and stood at the edge of the forest, its far stretching branches overshadowing the roofs of the village. Its dense foliage comprised a little botanical garden of its own, for an incredible profusion of orchids, ferns, and other epiphytes could be seen through the telescope growing on the branches.

On the 4th of February we left Djimbuli, and entered the most beautiful part of the Bangandu country. The beauty of the scenery is due to a definite alternation of hills and valleys, although the difference of level is nowhere very great. Marching in the shade of the forest, my caravan toiled up the ascent to the hill on which the village of Boenga stands.

I had heard a good deal of high-lying Boenga from Mildbraed's letters as well as from other sources, but after my long sojourn in the plains, I was surprised once more to stand on an eminence that might be dignified with the name of mountain, though it is scarcely three hundred feet above the level of the Bumba. Boenga is one of the few spots whence a view over the surrounding forest land can be obtained.

I pursued my ethnographical studies most successfully during my stay in Boenga. The wily old chief, a typical village potentate, supplied me with valuable data, and I gathered that the displacement of the aborigines by the advance of the Bangandus into the Ssanga-Djah triangle was of recent date, having taken place within the last few decades.

In N'ginda I had already noticed Bangandu men, whose peculiar dress, consisting of thick raphia-fibre skirts, resembled that worn by the Marshall islanders. (Illus. 129.) The natives had adopted this cool costume after migrating into the jungle, in place of their hot and unhealthy bark skirts. This shows how readily the Bangandus adapt themselves to their new surroundings. It also illustrates the difficulties encountered by the ethnographer owing to the common-sense attitude of the negro, and the absence of foolish sentiment on his part, in adopting any new thing which appears to him to be an improvement.

Our next stopping-place, Kumilla, is a village more picturesque even than Boenga. It stands on a hill about three hundred feet above the level of the Lokomo at its junction with the Bumba, and affords a magnificent view over the surrounding wooded country.

Shortly before my arrival a great circumcision festival had taken place, traces of which remained in the young

trees driven into the ground in the village street in order to form a stand for the spectators. Unfortunately the distrust of the Bangandus increased the difficulties of my investigations with regard to this somewhat delicate matter, and what I was told sounded too fantastic to be true. It was not until I reached the frontier of the Bangandu country that I stumbled by accident on the desired information.

It was in Kumilla that I saw in use for the first time a weapon that I had already several times observed in the hands of some of the Bangandu men, namely, the cross-bow. (Illus. 126, 127.)

Opinions differ as to the manner in which William Tell's historic weapon found its way into the Bangandu country. The fact remains that it is used by several hunting tribes and by the natives of the Soudan who have migrated south into the jungle, whereas amongst the Mi-Ssangas, for example, it is unknown.

The natives are very skilful in the use of the cross-bow. The animals which they kill with its short arrows are those inhabiting the tree-tops, such as monkeys and birds. Nothing is done to the arrows used for killing birds, but for shooting monkeys, they are invariably dipped in strophanthus juice, a poison which kills them almost instantaneously. Some of the Kumilla crossbow-men displayed their skill to me. Their arrows are never poisoned, as they are used only against birds. They are forbidden to kill monkeys, these animals being regarded as sacred to the dead.

The worship of their ancestors by the Bangandus is one of the few matters not governed by practical considerations, and the same applies to everything that concerns death. Like the Mi-Ssangas, the Bangandus practise very elaborate burial cere-

monies, which are in fact almost universal in the South Cameroons, especially on the occasion of a chief's death. It is exceedingly difficult to learn anything about the formalities that take place, everything being conducted with the utmost secrecy; consequently the suspicion that cannibalism is practised as one of the burial rites cannot be excluded. Amongst the Bangandus—as also in isolated cases amongst the Mi-Ssangas, and invariably amongst the Kunabembes—important personages are laid to rest in hollow trees, or in the natural niches between two large tree roots. This was openly admitted to me, and yet I have never succeeded in discovering any of these tree-graves in the jungle.

As a matter of fact these so-called burial places of the chiefs are indicated by means of triangular clearances in the underwood; one side of the triangle coinciding with the road, while the vertex points towards the grave. But since the graves are not discoverable, it may be assumed that the triangles are intentionally misleading, in order to prevent unnecessary intrusion by Europeans. This suspicion was strengthened by what my Kunabembe “boy” told me on this subject. As a rule these triangular places are covered on the side facing the road by a hunting net, or else by a curtain made of raphia fibre, whilst along the base of the triangle a liana is stretched, with pieces of wood knotted into it at intervals, one for every enemy killed by the deceased. (Illus. 131.)

I obtained a great deal of information respecting the Bangandus at Peum, the last village belonging to this tribe, as I was obliged to spend a week here in order to enable Mildbraed to go on ahead. He had already spent several days in the so-called Bange

jungle, which is separated from Peum by the Lokomo River. This was the first "dead" stretch of jungle through which we had to pass, that is to say, it was an absolutely deserted district in which it was impossible, even by forced marches, to reach any human habitation in one day. No one has described these "dead" stages so graphically as Stanley, and when they extend over several days' march they constitute a serious obstacle necessitating the carrying of large supplies of provisions.

The energetic Governor of Molundu was, therefore, rendering a real service to travellers when he began, in spite of vigorous protests on the part of the natives, to forcibly populate these deserted districts. But this kind of thing can only be done gradually, and at the time of our travels, the new settlements were not sufficiently advanced to supply us with food.

During my stay in Peum I was able, in a totally unexpected manner, to enrich my store of knowledge respecting the Bangandus. One of the chief's wives was suffering from such severe rheumatic pains that her screams kept the whole village awake every night. Partly, I must confess, from selfish motives, I gave her some powerful ointment that I happened to have with me, and which cured her of her pains. Her husband, who had previously shown himself very reserved, became exceedingly friendly, and helped me in my work in every possible way.

When once their distrust was overcome, the villagers soon got over their shyness, but they never became importunate, as is so often the case amongst natives. The children played outside my tent with the same innocent high spirits as if there were no white man in the village. In the evening I often took a pleasure

in watching the boys and girls romping in the moonlight, sometimes accompanying their games with merry songs. (Illus. 135.)

I was surprised to see how much their games resembled those of European children, though of course they were adapted to African conditions. When the boys and girls were playing together the tendencies of their sexes were clearly defined, the boys rushing about in little carts that they had constructed for themselves, and the girls amusing themselves with their dolls. The dolls were the simplest that can be imagined, consisting merely of a large block of the juicy banana stalk, which the girls fastened to their waists with a string.

I shall always retain the most pleasant recollections of my visit to Peum, where I spent many happy hours amongst the merry children of Nature. On the evening that preceded my departure my tent was filled with natives—men, women, and children—all anxious to see the photographs that I had taken of them. When they had made out the figures of the photographs, and recognised a familiar face, they went into fits of laughter, as if it were a great joke, and my tent resounded with “Ohs” and “Ahs” of amazement. No display of my photographs has ever in all my life received such an enthusiastic reception as by these simple people.

I would willingly have stayed longer in this charming village, but here, as in many other places in the course of my travels, the difficulties of feeding my bearers forced me to push on. On the morning of the 14th of March my bearers, who in the meantime had carried Mildbraed's baggage one stage further, took up my loads, and scrambled down the steep incline to the Lokomo River. We crossed the bridge, consisting



124. Bangandu village.



125. Plantation N'gusi in the primaeval forest.



126. Bangandu bending his crossbow. 127. Bangandu crossbowman.



128. Bangandu at the loom.

of a fallen tree, and then pushed on into the dark glades of the uninhabited jungle, which was to afford us shelter for the next three days. (Illus. 133.)

Meanwhile, in spite of occasional showers, the dry season had set in, and the vast forest, extending over many miles of deserted country, had a gloomy and lifeless appearance. Not a bird, not even an insect, was to be seen. Its dark green depths, against which the tall, straight stems of the *Triplochiton* (illus. 138), the *Piptadenia africana*, and other gigantic trees stood out clearly, maintained a mysterious and impressive silence.

My colleague had left traces of his activity in the shape of empty cartridges and large flowering branches lying here and there on the ground, which gave evidence of the battles he had fought with the tall trees and lianas.

The jungle affords a delightful camping ground provided the season is favourable, and provided a suitable spot is selected. This is not always an easy matter, for apart from the necessity of being near a sufficient water supply, the traveller must beware of pitching his tent under a tree whose dead branches may prove dangerous. It is generally necessary to make a more or less extensive clearance. But even with these disadvantages the forest is preferable to a village street as a camping ground. In the villages there is always a danger of being tormented by mosquitoes or sand-flies, there is little shade from the burning rays of the sun, and one's work is continually interrupted by endless palaver with the negroes.

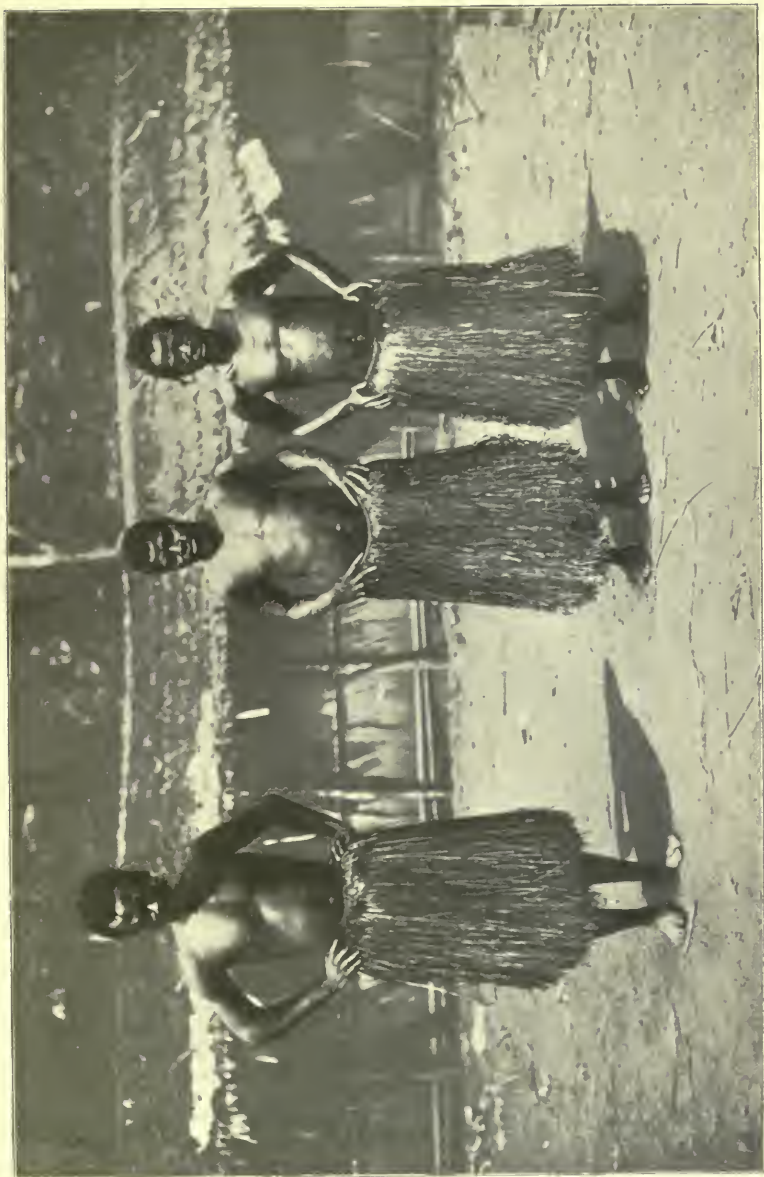
My first night in the Bange jungle was the first I had spent in the forest for several years, and I surrendered

myself to the enjoyment of the wonderful and awe-inspiring solitude. My bearers were in the highest spirits, for one of the hunters had killed a small antelope, and they sang and danced merrily. The blue smoke of the glowing camp fire rose in misty spirals and disappeared between the tree-tops in the deepening twilight. The tropical night soon wrapped everything in darkness, and ushered in the myriad insect singers, who kept silence during the day and began their concert only at dusk. The songs of my carriers gradually subsided, until at last they ceased altogether.

Everything lay wrapped in sleep when the moon rose and pierced the foliage screen above me. The air was cool, almost cold, and I shivered as I wrapped myself in my rugs. It was the coldest night that we had yet experienced, though the thermometer stood at 63° F., which may seem warm to Europeans at home, but was chilly for anyone accustomed to the tropics. We were cold and shivering when we set out soon after sunrise.

The length of the day's march in the jungle depends even more than in inhabited districts, on the situation of the pre-arranged camping places, for the traveller must carefully apportion his stock of provisions, and is well advised to make an early start. The places suitable for a camp may be recognized by the ashes of former camp fires, for in a country which is so rich in india-rubber, the forest paths are more frequented than might be supposed.

The two settlements recently established in the Bange forest by order of the authorities at Molundu afforded a pleasant break in the monotony of the jungle, though they gave evidence of the great difficulties that had to be overcome. Even in the tropics



129. Bangandu in bast aprons.



130. Mausoleum in the village of Yukaduma.



131. Burial place of a Bangandu chief near Kumilla.

it takes a certain time for the plantations to bear fruit, and the natives do not see the object of their appointed task and naturally dislike the trouble of fetching all their provisions from a distance for a whole year.

On reaching the Bange River we left the "dead" forest zone behind, and after crossing with some difficulty the so-called Bange bridge, which consists merely of a very slippery tree trunk, we encamped on the steep bank of the Bumba River close to a factory belonging to the South Cameroon Company.

In the factory manager's house, I found Mildbraed, whom I had heard botanising that same morning. He was surrounded by a mountain of botanical presses, full of forest flowers. He decided, however, to return for a few days to a most promising part of the Bange forest, and this gave me time to visit the neighbouring village, Bange, the birthplace of my "boy" Musa, whose countrymen were the notorious Kunabembes.

Anyone endeavouring to find his way by the map is not likely to be successful, for the inhabitants of the South-East Cameroons are continually moving about, so that even the best maps are soon out of date. It ought to be one of the most important duties of the authorities to accustom the natives to remain in their settlements. The present system of cultivating new forest districts every few years, and abandoning the old plantations, is very wasteful, and results in the irrevocable destruction of much valuable property.

Even the village in which Musa had first seen the light of day was no longer in the place laid down for it in the map. "Massa, them town I be born live now for some other place," he remarked in his pigeon English, as we set off in the direction of his "town,"

which proved to be three or four miles further west than it should have been according to the map. As we entered the village, I was amused to see the airs that Musa gave himself, as he swaggered along in a brand-new khaki uniform, his cap perched on the side of his head, his rifle on his shoulder, and evidently thinking himself a very "big man." Nothing would have induced him to forego this inspiring moment, when he made a triumphal entry into his native village.

After all that Musa had told me about his fellow-countrymen, I was agreeably surprised at the peaceful appearance of the Bange villagers. Naked children played with whips and tops in the clean village street, whilst the women and girls, adorned with heavy brass necklets, were returning from their work in the fields. (Illus. 140.) They wore bunches of scarlet blossoms, and appeared to be in high spirits. And yet it is these Kunabembes who practise the most revolting form of cannibalism, or at any rate did practise it until quite recently. Men who were on friendly terms used to give one another their parents in exchange, for cannibal purposes, as soon as they had grown old and weak, and were useless for anything else. I had heard this barbarous custom repeatedly ascribed to the Kunabembes, but could not bring myself to believe such an accusation, until it was confirmed by Musa.

On the 19th of February I continued my journey north. At first the path led through dense under-wood, which obliged us to stoop almost continuously. But in a short time we came to the easiest and most pleasant path that I have ever seen in all my Cameroon wanderings.

The two adjoining villages, Minyass and Kungo,

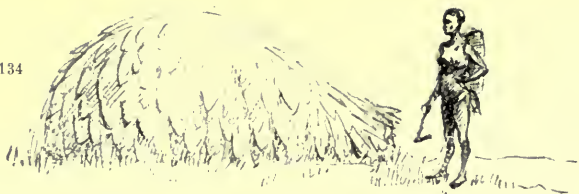


132. Entrance to the place of assembly of the newly circumcised near a Bangandu village.



133. In the Bangi forest.

134



134. Pygmy hut with doorway only half a yard high.

135



135. Pose of children for play.

136



136. The corpse of the chief Djaolo in Bigondji lying in state.

137



137. Bokari woman with balloon cap and cock's tail.

in which we encamped on the 19th of February, made a very pleasing impression. Like all the villages through which we had passed, they consisted of a double row of houses, separated by a straight and well-kept street. The houses were built close together, so that they formed one continuous building under one long roof. The wealth of the inhabitants, probably due in part to the recent rise in the price of rubber, was evidenced by the size and weight of the brass necklets worn by the women. It was very difficult to acquire any interesting ethnographical specimens, for with so many possibilities of earning money the Kunabembes had no use for my one or two mark pieces, or for my poor exchange wares. However, on the second day, with Musa's help, I was able to buy at a heavy price a few of the richly engraved necklets and anklets. They are worth about forty or fifty shillings of our money, and are circulated as currency in the purchase of wives. I was obliged to give the chieftain of Kungo a complete khaki outfit, and also to fulfil his dearest wish, which was to possess a pair of spectacles. He certainly looked very dignified in his large spectacles made of beautiful blue window-glass, and he felt that he now entirely resembled a white man.

The natives are spoiled by the attempts of the various rubber firms to outbid one another. At present there is plenty of india-rubber in the South-East Cameroons, but the profusion of *kickxias* will not long survive the reckless tapping of the natives.

As I was about to encamp in the neighbourhood of the village of Dumba, the chiefs of Dumba and Akamayong came to meet me. One of them was attired in French artillery trousers, and the other in khaki breeches; both of them wore white coats, and

irreproachable brown shoes—much too tight of course—and gaiters. The Dumba “king” wore a sun helmet covered with imitation leopard skin. Their appearance showed how much the india-rubber traders have changed the habits of these savages during the last few years. Some of my “boys” were overcome by the exceedingly comical aspect of these two victims of European civilisation, here in the middle of the jungle, and they greeted the village rulers with a roar of laughter. I was obliged to reprove them, as I did not wish to offend the chiefs.

My “boys” had carefully pitched my tent close to an *Afrostryax lepidophylla*, whose penetrating odour of garlic affected my nose in the most painful fashion, and entirely spoiled the beauty of the spot. The natives, however, are very fond of the smell of this tree, and they even use the bark to flavour their soup.

In the forest near Akamayong there is a huge tomb over the grave of a former chief. A clearance several hundred yards square has been made round the grave, and the trees are covered with stripes of red paint. The deceased must have been a great hero, for there were no less than thirty-eight knots in the liana, showing that he had killed thirty-eight enemies, some of whom, according to the good old Kunabembe fashion, he had no doubt cooked and assimilated.

In the village of N’kung, our last stopping-place before reaching Yukaduma, I made the acquaintance of the chief Dogelumpum, the most interesting personage in the whole district, who was held in high esteem because he could with impunity allow the most poisonous snakes to bite him. I was very anxious to meet this man, who had been described to me in Molundu as an arrant rogue, and I was somewhat

disappointed when a small, delicate-looking negro was presented to me as the famous snake-charmer. Many times I entreated him to display his skill to me, and at last, in my presence, he allowed a medium-sized poisonous tree-snake to bite him in the finger. He assured me that he had tried in vain to procure a cobra or a hooded viper. This was, of course, only an excuse, for it is quite possible that a native who has been repeatedly bitten by one of the smaller poisonous snakes may eventually become to a certain extent immune, but I very much doubt whether the man would placidly have permitted a large cobra to bite him.

Soon after passing a small ravine, in which for the first time I found some tree ferns, we once more entered the jungle, and we had to march several hours before we caught sight of the outskirts of Yukaduma. Beside the N'yui River is a clearance on which stands a large bark house and several sheds, from which the wind wafted the familiar smell of india-rubber. This is the Yukaduma factory belonging to the South Cameroon Company. I was hospitably received by the manager, Herr Graf, who had not seen a white man for many months.

The next morning the bearers returned to fetch Mildbraed's baggage, and I had plenty of time to sort and pack my specimens and prepare for the next stage of our journey : our eagerly anticipated excursion into the prairie land.

CHAPTER XXII

YUKADUMA TO ASSOBA

MEANWHILE the lesser rainy season was evidently approaching. We experienced the first appreciable downfall whilst we were encamped near the Bange River, and from the end of February onwards, violent rainstorms fell at shorter and shorter intervals, saturating the parched ground. The thunderstorms, too, that accompanied the rain, became more and more frequent, whilst about the middle of March tornadoes came up from the south-east, followed by continuous sheets of lightning, truly tropical in their brilliance.

The effect of the rain soon made itself felt. The first obvious result was the increasing number of insects, some of them harmless and beautiful; others, such as the vicious sand-flies (*Simulia*), spent their whole time in trying to make our lives miserable. These troublesome torments of the African tropics, against whose attacks the smallest meshed mosquito net is useless, probably came from the pisang plants of the neighbouring village.

These luxuriant and unusually productive plantations cover wide stretches of land round the new village of Yukaduma, and our hunters were consequently able to indulge in their favourite fruit, so necessary to their well-being. It is hard to say whether the wonderful profusion of bananas in this neighbourhood is due to the fertility of the ground, or to

the reprehensible custom of continually moving the plantations, and cultivating only virgin soil.

The Bumbums, who own these rich plantations, are closely related to the Kunabembes. They also claimed to be connected with the N'dzimus, who live near Lomie, as well as with the tribes inhabiting the banks of the Lower Djah and Ssanga Rivers, so that all the tribes of the South-East Cameroons, with the exception of those derived from the Soudan, may be included in one large family. It is difficult to trace the origin of many of their customs, analogous to those of far distant tribes, with which they can have had no possible connection. For instance, it seemed to me very strange to find among the Bumbums the custom ascribed by Schweinfurth and Schubotz to the Mangbettus, namely, that of dyeing their skin with the juice of the *Randia malleifera*. Some of the young people had adorned their faces with elaborate and tasteful patterns, and the blue-black dye showed up well on their brown skin.

While I was getting ready for my journey into the prairie, several Europeans arrived in Yukaduma. Amongst them was a merchant, Herr Funck, who extracted from me a promise to visit him in his lonely factory at Momos. This promise I never had cause to regret, for this gentleman was of great assistance to me in my ethnographical studies.

Mildbraed and I were fortunately not obliged to take all our baggage with us. We left most of our loads in Herr Graf's care, so that our bearers were now sufficiently numerous to enable us both to set off on the same day, the 15th of March.

Mildbraed went straight to the prairie, whilst I made a short detour to visit Herr Funck's factory at Momos.

I spent a few days in this comfortable abode, which was so charming that I could readily understand its owner having no desire to return to Europe. He entered into the thoughts and feelings of the natives, just as he understood the beasts of the jungle that he had tamed, and that followed him everywhere. The Pygmies of the neighbourhood were specially attached to him, and endeavoured to express their affection by bringing him large supplies of india-rubber.

It was here in Momos that I became intimately acquainted with this interesting race. The first time that I visited their camp in the jungle, the little people seemed somewhat nervous, but as soon as my companion had assured them that they might trust me as completely as they trusted him, they got over their timidity and were as affable and friendly as possible. They answered all my questions, and demonstrated to me their original and pleasing dances.

These dances differed from any I have ever seen before or since. They were round dances in which men, women, and children took part in turns, moving in circles with measured tread, and imitating by grotesque evolutions the paces of the various forest animals. Amongst the Bantus, on the other hand, one or two dancers perform in the middle of a ring of spectators. The round dances of the Pygmies recalled those of certain South African tribes.

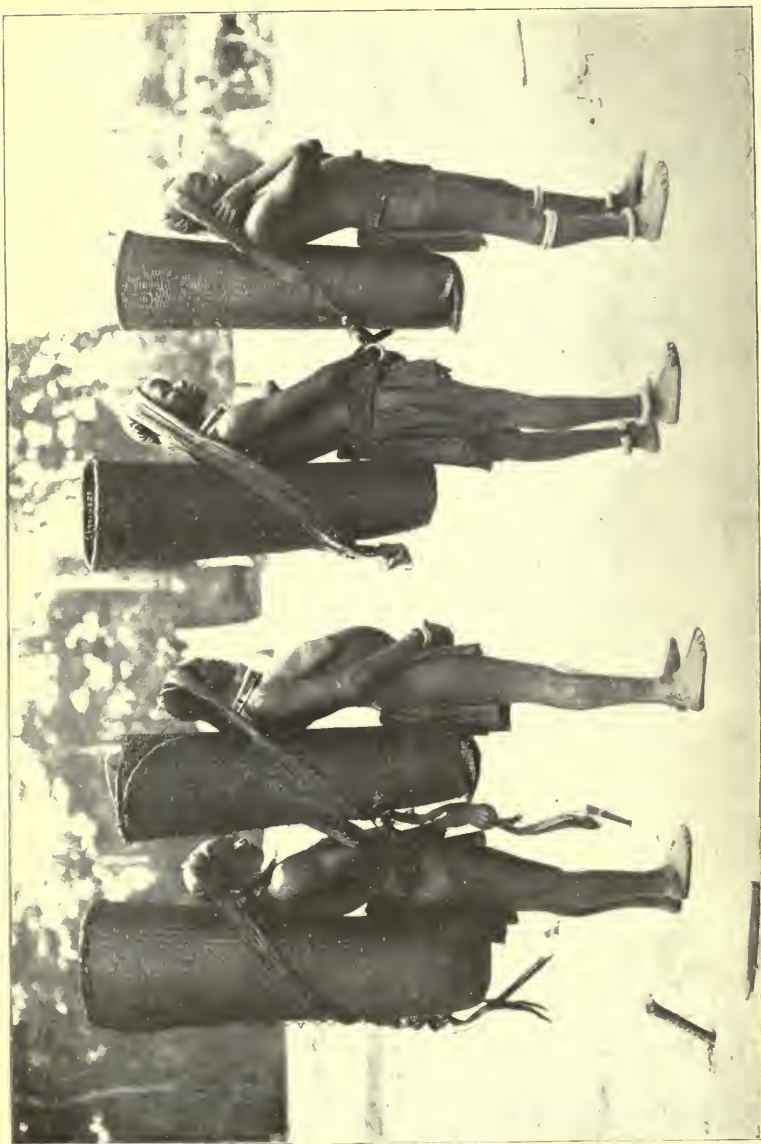
As a special mark of their confidence towards my host, the Pygmies occasionally spent the night at the factory. This was the case one evening when we sat with them by lamplight round a long table in the comfortable verandah. It was wretched weather, and we could hear the rain descending in torrents. The little men turned over the pages of some illustrated



138. Stem of Triplochiton in the Bangi forest.



139. Kunabembe village in recently cleared forest.



140. Kunabembe women with dössers near Yukaduma.

magazines, and by their frequent questions, betrayed a lively interest in European affairs. In return for my information they satisfied my curiosity with regard to some of their customs, and in this way I was able to obtain reliable details respecting their mode of hunting. As soon as the conversation turned on this subject, occupying as it does all their thoughts and aspirations, they became very animated; their gestures bespoke the enthusiastic hunter, and they were indefatigable in their efforts to make us understand their methods of stalking elephants. They confirmed the statement that I had heard in Molundu, that the spear is their only hunting weapon. They must certainly be possessed of extraordinary skill, physical endurance, coolness, and presence of mind in order to get within striking distance of the elephant. After wounding him in the body with their iron weapon, they follow him until he collapses. The Pygmies of the South Cameroons never make use of bows and arrows; they never lay traps, dig pits, or employ hunting nets such as are commonly used elsewhere. The only exception is in the case of the guinea-fowl, which is caught by means of small pit-falls, and the armadillo, or *pilika*, which they smoke out of its extensive underground burrows.

I considerably enlarged my vocabulary of the Pygmy tongue, and convinced myself that my small friends had kept their language free from foreign taint. On the 22nd of March I took leave of this fascinating spot, since the itinerary that we had drawn up in Yukaduma would not permit of a longer visit.

For many reasons I looked forward with eager anticipation to the coming journey. In the first place we were to traverse another wholly uninhabited district,

which had been described to us as being the richest in gorillas and elephants in the whole country. Then we were on the look-out for some interesting volcanic formations—lava-fields as they were called—that lay in our path, and finally we hoped to reach an ethnographically interesting district, partly jungle, partly prairie, situated close to the former Franco-German frontier, where for political and commercial reasons a strange jumble of the most diverse races had taken up their abode. I had received no news of Mildbraed since his departure, and this made me all the more anxious to set out.

We started at six o'clock in the morning, but the weather was not very promising. The sky overhead was blue, but in the West loomed a heavy bank of clouds, their sharply defined edges tipped with salmon-pink by the morning sun, while in the distance the thunder growled ominously.

The path was overhung with bushes, wet with the heavy dew, and they struck us in the face as we passed, so that in a very few minutes we were soaked through. There were no bridges, and each of the deeply cut water-courses caused us considerable delay. Meanwhile the clouds, though screened from sight by the trees, were coming up rapidly, as evidenced by the approaching thunder. We were soon in difficulties owing to our ignorance of the country, for the two men who professed to know the way led us hopelessly astray.

There was nothing to be done but to seek a guide in the newly built village of Saolo, and here we waited for the thunderstorm to pass over. After much bargaining we succeeded in procuring a guide, but his face showed clearly how much he resented his task.

I understood his feelings as soon as we had proceeded a hundred yards, for the path was one of the worst that I have ever traversed in the whole of Africa. We waded for hours through mud and mire, feeling our way step by step with our sticks, and following our guide at a snail's pace. The latter was obliged to cut his way with a hunting-knife through lianas, roots and branches, in pitch darkness and with a sultry green-house temperature.

Early in the day we had to cross the Bange River, a most perilous undertaking, as a slippery tree-trunk formed the only bridge over the deep and raging stream. Towards three o'clock in the afternoon the ground became so treacherous that it was only by making long detours that we could make any progress at all. At length we reached the border of a so-called prairie, that is to say, a bare patch in the jungle, covered with ferns and surrounded by gigantic raphia palms. The ground was trampled by numerous elephants and buffaloes, but we were all too exhausted to take the least interest in these exciting spoors.

We encamped in the neighbourhood of the prairie, and in order to avoid catching cold, I helped to build the leaf huts for the bearers until my tent was ready. Vapour was rising from the ground and condensing on the trees. I kept my tent tolerably dry by burning a few candles, and fixed up lines on which I hung my clothes to dry.

During the night our Saolo guide took himself off, leaving us to find our way as best we could; his defection struck me as being a bad advertisement for the road that lay before us in this appalling forest, and my surmise proved correct.

The path, which was scarcely worthy of the name,

turned out to be almost impassable, but we were relieved to learn from two chance passers-by that we were going in the right direction. We hurried on as fast as possible, although we knew that the eagerly anticipated "lava-fields" could not be reached in less than a day and a half. Mildbraed's tracks were visible in two places, and in the evening we came to a place where he had evidently encamped.

Although this part of the jungle was said to be inhabited by gorillas, we did not see any; several times, however, large animals could be heard crashing through the undergrowth, and on two separate occasions elephants crossed our path, scattering the bearers right and left. After a long march, which was rendered possible only by cutting our way through the bush with hunting-knives, we at length struck the main road.

It was a pleasant change to be once more treading a beaten track, and we hurried along like horses whose heads are turned towards home.

When at last we reached the famous "lava-fields," I felt that Herr Koch had by no means exaggerated their beauty. A large stone-covered plain, partly hidden by turf, resembling an English park or golf course, conjured up a scene of peculiar charm. The rock, which certainly bore some resemblance to certain volcanic formations, was composed of the same ferruginous laterite that I had seen in blocks of various sizes in the neighbourhood of Molundu.

In the furthest corner of this open space I found numerous spoors of both elephants and buffaloes. It was very late, close upon sunset, before the last of the carriers reached camp.

Our next day's march brought us to the country inhabited by the Bidjuks, one of those tribes that



141. Meadowland near Yendi.



142. Plantation near Yukaduma.



143. Aged Bokari.



144. Bokari village, near the northern boundary of the forest.

formerly lived much further east, until one day, weary of the constant opportunity of French rubber merchants, they migrated with all their goods and chattels into German territory. We spent a night in the village of Bundji, before setting off towards the Yendi prairie.

The ground rose gradually, until after three hours' marching the path became so steep that I felt sure we must be nearing our destination. Suddenly we saw the light shining through the branches, and leaving the forest behind us, we stepped out on to a wide expanse of grass. I drew a deep breath, feeling like some one who has long been shut up in a dark place, and for the first time sees once more the light of day. (Illus. 141.)

The dark-green of the forest contrasted markedly with the emerald hue of the young grass that covered the ground with the fresh green of spring.

The short turf was interrupted by various herbs, and by patches of white, silvery lichen, with here and there a pool of rain water.

This ideal pasturage naturally offered great attractions to wild animals, and one of the hunters shot two splendid red buffaloes. Among smaller animals, flocks of sand-pipers flew up from the vicinity of the pools, and gaudy swallow-tailed butterflies fluttered hither and thither amongst the fragrant anona trees.

I pitched my tent on the edge of the prairie, in the shade of the forest, thus enjoying an ideal camping ground; my bearers, however, being free from "foolish sentiment," preferred to take up their abode in the neighbouring village of Yendi. Shortly after the second buffalo had been shot, the chief of Yendi, dressed in the uniform of a French dragoon, came to see me on a matter of business.

One of his suite, who spoke a little French, explained the chief's wishes. It turned out that he wanted to purchase one of the buffaloes, and as I had exhausted my supply of ready money, we soon came to terms, and the chief counted out on my table the sum of one hundred marks, mostly in small coinage. I subsequently learned that he sold the meat to his subjects at a much higher price, for meat is the most coveted article in these parts, and the natives' craving for meat probably explains their cannibalism.

The next day's march proved in every way interesting, though it rained in torrents and the ground was very slippery. We proceeded for some time on a plateau, which, according to my aneroid, was 2500 feet high.

In Bigondji, the next village, great excitement reigned on account of the death of the chief Djaolø, who, shortly before my arrival, had been accidentally shot while gorilla hunting by one of his own villagers. The official wailing, which on such occasions is carried on by the women, had not yet begun, and the relatives of the dead chief showed silent, but evidently genuine grief. His brother had daubed his body in the most extraordinary fashion with white paint, this being the customary mourning colour. The grave had already been dug in the village, and "lying-in-state" in his hut was the poor fellow for whom everyone was mourning, and who had shaken hands with Mildbraed only two days before.

The "lying-in-state" was a strange ceremony. The deceased was placed in a sitting posture on a low chair, with his feet in two baskets, one inside the other. His right hand was suspended from the roof, his body was wrapped in a Haussa mantle, and a large European hat covered his head and face. (Illus. 136.) His wives

sat round him weeping quietly, and keeping off the flies with fans. The author of the disaster stood on one side in deep dejection, apparently wondering how he was to procure the two oxen which he had been ordered to pay to atone for his carelessness.

I encamped for the night in the village of Difolo, whence I could see through gaps in the forest far away to the West, and backwards towards the plateau that I had quitted early in the morning.

The bearers' present mode of carrying their loads showed that we had reached the prairie country. Whereas in marching through the jungle they carried their loads on their backs, with bent heads, here in the "grass land," the men carried everything on their heads and consequently looked straight before them, while their gait was freer and more erect.

The attire of the Baya women was most grotesque, especially their wonderful feats of hairdressing, which we had already noticed in Bigondji. Even more striking than their coiffure was the only article of clothing worn by these women. It consisted of a heart-shaped bunch of leaves worn over the loins, and suspended from the waist by a cord. For unmarried women it was surmounted by a rotang cane over a yard in length, which protruded like a cock's tail, swinging so comically when the wearer walked, that it evoked a roar of laughter from my "boys." (Illus. 137, 147.)

The prairie land in the neighbourhood of Lau consists of nothing but large, free spaces, dotted about in the forest, obviously ancient cultivated spots, and covered with long grass. This long elephant-grass, fifteen to twenty feet high, and disseminating a disagreeable odour of burning, not only shut out the view, but

presented a more impenetrable wall than the worst *Phrynium* undergrowth in the jungle. No breeze reached the path, and the sun blazed down upon the heads of my unfortunate bearers, accustomed as they were to the shade of the forest. It is hard to understand why this district should have been so extolled in Molundu.

Not far from Lau we were met by the chief of this village, an energetic man, who spoke a little English and French. The clean and durable aspect of his village seemed to confirm his statement that it was a permanent settlement.

The chief of Lau paid me several visits in my camp close to his village, and imparted to me some interesting facts regarding the secret society called *Labi*, which is disseminated far and wide throughout the country.

The most astonishing thing connected with this society is its secret language, understood by all members, and constituting a bond of union between natives belonging to the most diverse and often hostile tribes. A *Labi* member may not kill his antagonist in battle after the latter has proclaimed his membership by means of a few code words. Duku, a soldier who accompanied me, belonged to this society, and confirmed the statements of the Lau chief, adding that its members are found among the Yangheres, Bokaris, Bipalos, and Kakas, as well as among the Makas and Yebekolles.

My impression that there is no sharp boundary between jungle and prairie was confirmed by the aspect of the country through which we marched in a northerly direction, after leaving Lau on the 31st of March. Soon after quitting this village we entered a beautiful primary forest of tall trees. As a result of the foregoing rain, there was a profusion of insect life such



145. Painted Yanghere house.



146. Round hut on the forest boundary.



147. Bokari woman with cock's-tail.



148. Yanghere village.

as is seldom seen even in the depths of the jungle. The air was alive with butterflies of the most brilliant colours, mostly of the *Cymothoe* species, whilst on the damp banks of the streams fluttered swarms of glossy black swallow-tails (*Papilio machaon*), with yellow, green, white, blue, and red markings. These insects, together with many other smaller varieties, eagerly sucked up the moisture, paying but scant attention to passers-by. (Illus. 120, 122.)

In an ideal spot in the shady underwood I came upon the camp of a Frenchman who, as representative of the "Haute-Sangha" Company, was constructing a frontier road with a view to checking the migration of natives into German territory. He was accompanied by two armed natives in uniform, whom I at first mistook for soldiers. A uniform makes a great impression on the native mind, and a European accompanied by men in uniform is sure of a much better reception by the natives than a traveller who is without this moral support.

I had now made the acquaintance of the three rival parties in the india-rubber trade, namely the French company officials, the English and German traders with their black agents, outbidding one another in their prices, and the crafty Haussas, who speculate on the natives' insatiable craving for meat. I used to be of opinion that the *Kickxia* might be protected from ultimate extermination by strict laws, but I now realised that any effort in this direction would be labour lost. The day will come when the wild *Kickxia* is a thing of the past, and in the interests of the natives and of the agricultural development of the country, one can only say: the sooner the better!

It is to be hoped that the authorities will make themselves responsible for replacing the wild *Kickxias* by permanent plantations.

From some high-lying houses in the village of Dalugene I obtained for the first time a comprehensive view over the surrounding country. There was no marked difference between the "grass fields" that lay before me and other prairie land that I had seen elsewhere. There was a dearth of mountains, and the time of year was unfavourable for the growth of the various herbs. I saw on all sides nothing but flat, monotonous country, uniformly covered with elephant-grass, interrupted in the neighbourhood of the water-courses by dark-green belts of trees, with here and there a village whose neutral tinted houses were scarcely distinguishable from their surroundings.

After crossing the troubled waters of the Baturi River, on its way to join the Kadei, I met Mildbraed, who had pitched his tent in the long elephant grass among the trees that bordered the river. He had been suffering from fever, and complained of the incredible dearth of flowers in these prairies. We agreed that we would not stay here long, especially as the provisioning of our bearers was no easy matter.

Another inducement to hasten our departure lay in the near neighbourhood of the large Kaka village of Dalugene, whose inhabitants are the most notorious cannibals of tropical Africa. However, the long, wide village street, as we passed down it, was the picture of peace and quiet. All the energies of the inhabitants seemed to be devoted to adding to their earnings by means of india-rubber. Two factories managed by European traders stand on the sunny hill on which the village is built, and which is totally devoid of the least particle

of shade. Haussas in richly embroidered robes went to and fro with measured tread; black traders belonging to various European firms displayed invitingly in their shops all kinds of European trifles likely to attract the Kaka beauties: gaudy handkerchiefs, blue, red, and yellow beads to adorn their complicated coiffure, and pencils of coloured glass to wear in their pierced noses. Men squatted in front of the houses, of whom the older ones, mostly with long beards and wearing Soudanese robes, were skilfully plaiting large, thick raphia fibre mats to hang on the walls of the houses. (Illus. 149.) Others were making beds of raphia shreds, each couch being provided with a neck block intended to protect the elaborately dressed hair of the women, with more regard for vanity than comfort. (Illus. 150.)

Even the women, with their children playing around them, carried on their household tasks in the street; they cooked, made pots, and plaited strong wicker baskets. (Illus. 151.) Here, too, I saw the erection of one of their elaborate coiffures: thick coils of carefully collected hair were first made (illus. 152), and fixed on to the head with little plaits of natural hair, gaily decorated with beads; to protect the whole structure it is usually wrapped in a tight, greased cloth, since the coiffure combines use with beauty and serves as a prop for heavy loads.

The following day Mildbraed and I decided to press on into the prairies in two different directions. Mildbraed set out in the direction of the Kadei River, and I towards the N'gamdio mountain, near the village of New-Molaye. The country through which I passed corresponded on the whole to that which we had traversed on our arrival in the prairie land,

although in places it offered more variety than I had anticipated. The monotony of the long elephant grass was interrupted at intervals by huge white ant hills, a few wretched specimens of *Borassus* palms, isolated thorny bushes, or the crimson umbels of a large orchid (*Lissochilus*). In one enclosed spot I came across some Soudanese bushes, such as *Anona senegalensis*, and *Bauhinia reticulata*, which recalled the fruit gardens of Adamaua. Mildbraed also found these plants while on his way to the Kadei.

The village of New-Molaye is built on an exposed hill, not quite as high as the N'gamdio mountain, which I ascended the same afternoon, in oppressively sultry weather. It proved to be an uninteresting, truncated cone, destitute of trees or shrubs, and covered with scanty elephant grass. The view, however, compensated for the fatigue of climbing, for it extended as far as the hills on the left bank of the Kadei, where not the smallest hamlet was discernible through my powerful field-glasses. Some of the forest belts seemed to me to be unusually wide, especially the one bordering the Kadei. On my return, after walking through the charred elephant grass, I must have looked as black as a coal-heaver.

My camp was conveniently placed on the highest part of the village hill, in that the breeze reached me from every quarter and minimised the scorching heat. The very next night, however, I realised how thoughtless I had been in choosing such an exposed camping ground. About midnight a thunderstorm burst over the village and discharged its full fury over my tent. It was a most unpleasant experience, as my tent-pole in its exposed position, and with its iron supports, acted as a lightning conductor. By one o'clock the

violence of the storm was spent, and the atmosphere so much cooler that I could breathe freely. But a couple of hours later it was as sultry as ever, and in an incredibly short time a second thunderstorm, to which the first was but child's play, broke over us. The noise of the thunder resembled an uninterrupted cannonade, and it was surprising that my tent was not struck by lightning. It was the worst thunderstorm that I have ever experienced in the tropics, and it was morning before I could snatch a few hours' rest.

The same afternoon I rejoined Mildbraed, who had enjoyed the thunderstorm of the previous night as little as I had done. He had pitched his tent in the forest belt near the Kadei, and the torrents of rain had threatened to swamp the whole camp. He had discovered nothing of any interest in the neighbourhood of the river, so that he was quite willing to leave the prairie country the following day.

Under the circumstances we were glad to plunge once more into the jungle, turning our backs on the grass land which had proved so uninteresting.

On the return journey to Yukaduma, for the first stage of which we had taken the road with which we were already familiar, an adventure befel Mildbraed which might have had serious consequences.

On the morning of the 6th of April I had just left a small village in the Bokari district when a messenger came running to me bearing a hurriedly written letter from a trader named Maak, informing me that my comrade had been bitten by a poisonous snake and was in danger of his life. Greatly agitated, I hurried forward, and found Mildbraed in the village of M'bio, surrounded by four European traders who happened

to be passing. His right arm was much swollen, and he lay in a dazed state with every symptom of poisoning.

It turned out that when about to break camp, Mildbraed had noticed a reptile which he considered worth catching, and had taken hold of it, firmly believing it to be a harmless ringed worm. Unfortunately it was not a ringed worm, but a very poisonous snake closely resembling it in appearance, *Atractaspis corpulenta*, which promptly retaliated by biting him in the finger. Mildbraed, still in ignorance of the poisonous nature of the animal, paid little attention to the accident, but half an hour later, just as he was passing Soltau's factory, violent symptoms of poisoning set in. It was much too late for any of the usual antidotes such as strong doses of alcohol, or incisions round the wound, to be effective, for the poison was evidently in his system. Even the usually potent remedies of the natives administered by the advice of the village "medicine man" produced no result. When at last the man carrying my drugs had arrived, hours had elapsed since the bite, and I administered some of them merely in order to feel that I had neglected no possible antidote.

There was nothing to do but wait, in the hopes that my comrade's vigorous constitution would be able to withstand the effect of the poison. It was late at night, after many anxious hours, that the first signs of improvement were noticeable. The patient was able to retain the first spoonful of cognac, and his pulse became more regular. From this moment he made rapid strides towards recovery, and by the next morning he was so much better that he declared his intention of starting on the following day. When



149. Kaka men weaving mats.



150. Kaka man mending a bed.



I gave the "witch-doctor" of M'bio a fee for his "professional services" in the form of a new khaki uniform, he seemed very proud, and he had evidently risen considerably in the estimation of his countrymen.

Early on the 10th of April Mildbraed and I entered upon the last stage of the return journey to Yukaduma, this time due south-west from the village of Lamuk through the "dead" jungle. Mildbraed was now quite out of danger, and begged me to disregard the slow pace necessitated by the results of his illness, and to go on ahead. I was induced to hasten on, chiefly by the knowledge that the additional bearers, requisitioned from the station of Lomie in order to accelerate our progress through the third and largest "dead" jungle area, were awaiting us at Yukaduma.

Soon after passing through the village of Lamuk, whose chief, a typical master of craft, had made excuses for a scanty supply of provisions on the ground that his village owned very few plantations, I accidentally learned that he had deceived me. Having gone a little out of my way, I met a whole troop of Lamuk women, heavily laden with provisions, marching in the bed of a small stream, and obviously coming from some concealed farm. My men smiled a knowing smile, and expressed their astonishment at my not being acquainted with this favourite trick of many forest tribes, who, besides the "official" plantations, possess others concealed in the bush.

In this connection my bearers informed me that it is a matter of impossibility to find these places since the roads leading to them are the beds of the streams, which, of course, wash away every footprint; they also assured me that these hiding-places often contain large stores of ammunition such as rifles and powder.

Negroes, however, always exaggerate to such an extent that it is exceedingly difficult to know how much to believe of their assertions. In any case, the conduct of the Lamuk chieftain was certainly typical of his countrymen, and illustrates the craftiness of the natives.

The part of the jungle which we now entered was but little different to that which I had already seen. Animals were scarce, apart from the insect world, which was abundantly represented. It was only by their noise that the larger animals betrayed their presence. During my first night in the jungle, I was disturbed by the most fearsome sounds: a kind of angry barking mingled with roaring, which my bearers assured me must be caused by fighting gorillas. I had my doubts as to the correctness of this explanation, since it is well known that the anthropoid apes are not nocturnal in their habits.

At the station of Plehn I learned that the Lomie bearers had been waiting for some time in Yukaduma, so I marched on without further delay, and reached this station the same afternoon amid torrential rain.

Mildbraed arrived the next day, and as we had too much to do in packing all the treasures that we had collected to be able to start off again at once, we despatched all the available men, with an escort of two soldiers, to cut a path through the jungle. Our previous experiences had taught us how much the explorer is hindered from collecting specimens, when he is continually engaged in removing or avoiding obstacles upon the road.

During our week's stay in Yukaduma our zoological collection was enriched by a very valuable specimen, for one day one of our hunters brought in a huge chim-

panzee. (Illus. 154.) It was an old male, with the same evil expression as a gorilla, and when alive he must have been almost as formidable an adversary as his large cousin. The greyish white hair on his back was a striking feature. The damp climate of the jungle made the preservation of our zoological specimens a matter of considerable difficulty, and it was only after a great deal of trouble that we succeeded in saving this precious trophy. The meat of the chimpanzee provided a pleasant change in the menu of our negroes, who consider it a great luxury, and the N'dzimu bearers repeatedly assured me that the taste is similar to that of human flesh.

We had to take with us enough food to carry us over the uninhabited part of the jungle, and the greed of the natives is liable to stultify the best-laid plans. Unless they are carefully supervised, they are quite ready to devour in one afternoon the provisions for four days, confident that "massa" will somehow or other provide them with "chop."

Mildbraed was the first to vanish in the foliage of the "dead" Assobam jungle, setting off in a westerly direction early on Easter Sunday, in glorious weather. Each of his men carried four days' provisions, and three other bearers were entrusted with supplies for one day more.

The Assobam jungle is the larger of the two "concession districts" belonging to the South Cameroon Company. Throughout both these districts are scattered collecting stations managed by Europeans who supervise the gradual collection of the rubber, so that the supply obtained is of the highest quality. These are the loneliest and most remote dwellings for white men that it is possible to imagine, for it

is only on rare occasions that another European penetrates so far into the jungle. It is not everyone who would care for such a post, yet there are men who can live here quite contentedly. They belong to that small community of the elect who never tire of reading in the book of Nature her inexhaustible and ever-changing daily lessons.

On Easter Monday I, too, was swallowed up by the dark leafy glades of the vast, deserted jungle. The bearers carried, besides their loads, provisions for five days, which I had distributed to them in the early morning. In addition the kindly Yukaduma natives had given them many farewell gifts of food, so that in this respect they appeared to be well provided for. Herr Graf accompanied me as far as the outskirts of the village, and when he took leave of me the weather was warm and sunny. The fine weather lasted a few days longer, and then the lesser rainy season set in with redoubled violence, and during the succeeding weeks there were well-nigh daily showers more or less violent, or else tornadoes, thundering in the near distance.

It was not until we had reached our first camping ground that I found leisure to muster my new N'dzimu bearers, who differed in every respect from my old Bule men. There was an unmistakable note of cannibal greed in their repulsive, half sullen, half cunning countenances, surmounted by a ponderous coiffure, and armed with sharp teeth filed to a point, resembling those of a tiger. How much more sociable and accommodating were my old bearers belonging to the warlike Bule tribe! The Bule women especially, who, according to the almost universal custom of the South Cameroons, accompanied the men and took their share of the



152. Kaka women remaking hair-pad.



153. Strangling fig in the forest.



154. Old Tschego. (Chimpanzee.)

work of carrying, displayed remarkable courage and endurance, never grumbling even under the greatest hardships. A few of the Bule "boys" subsequently proved first-rate assistants in collecting and preserving specimens; Mildbraed's "botanical assistant," the admirable Ekomeno, was familiar with a great many plants, and was particularly clever in discovering those that were new to his masters. But his powers of observation were at least equalled by those of my "boy" Stepke, whose practised eyesight never missed any rare zoological specimen.

One advantage of having men of different tribes lay in the fact that if anyone stole or committed any other irregularity, one tribe would invariably "tell tales" of the other to "Massa." This was particularly useful during our long march through the jungle, as it facilitated the watch I was obliged to keep on the supply of provisions.

On the second day's march we came to an end of the path that had been cleared for us by the men sent on from Yukaduma. We had to force our way through the dense undergrowth, clambering over fallen tree-trunks, and stumbling over roots hidden from view by the herbaceous growth. We noticed a most destructive blight of caterpillars that spared neither shrubs nor tree-tops, and denuded every plant of its foliage. This phenomenon is generally present only to a limited extent, but here everything was swarming with these devastating insects: black *Ophiuride* caterpillars with crimson and grey markings. Day and night we were surrounded by these crawling horrors; it was impossible to sit or lie anywhere without crushing hundreds of them, and they haunted us at table and in bed. This plague of caterpillars was at its worst at our second

camping-ground, which we reached at dusk. Every garment had to be shaken before being donned in the morning, and we were thankful that these creatures possessed no stinging hairs, like some varieties of European caterpillars.

The following day was ushered in by a thunderstorm, which turned into a typical jungle tornado. I had been expecting it for some hours, the night being unusually sultry, but it did not reach us until 4 a.m. The characteristic premonitory signs were noticeable, especially the rustling of the leaves, which gives warning of the approach of a thunderstorm, and sounds like the mighty roar of a waterfall. Dead branches rained down upon my tent. As soon as the thunder became audible the roar of the forest subsided, and before reaching our camp, the force of the tornado was spent, owing to the elastic resilience of the tree-tops. It is well known that a tornado never attains in the jungle the same raging, devastating violence as in the plains, where the restraining influence of the trees is absent. At dawn the thunder gave place to a solid downpour of rain, and it was not until late in the morning that we were able to break camp.

On both sides of the Bonda River we had to cross a wide strip of submerged country, which resembled the swamps of Molundu. I was thankful to find that the rain had not yet made any appreciable difference to the level of the river, for I learned from my bearers that during the rainy season caravans have often been stopped by the inundations of the Bonda River, and have sometimes been actually forced to retrace their steps. The high-water marks visible on the tree trunks, far above the present level of the river, proved that this was no exaggeration.



155. Phoenix palms.



156. Meadow land.



157. Station in the forest.



158. Raffia thicket.

A very graceful palm tree, *Phœnix spinosa*, grew in clumps in and around the first clearance that we encountered in the forest. (Illus. 155, 156.) It attained a height of about fifty feet, and seemed to indicate that the ground in these clearances is not after all so very unproductive.

In the afternoon the bearers laid down their loads in one of the most picturesque spots in the whole forest, half-way up a hill, not far from the comfortable abode of Herr Funck, who leads a hermit's life as overseer of one of the rubber collecting stations. (Illus. 157.) Here I came upon Mildbraed, who had been fortunate enough to shoot two fine red buffaloes in a neighbouring clearance. The natives were so excited at the prospect of this unexpected addition to our larder, that all else was forgotten, and I had the greatest difficulty in inducing anyone to pitch my tent.

A dense fog enveloped both river and forest, and a ghostly moon pierced this greyish white curtain. A fearsome roaring sounded from the opposite bank of the Bumba River, which the natives assured me could be produced only by a gorilla.

The next day I went for a walk with Herr Funck, who proved to be a most observant naturalist, and a very interesting companion. The scenery was beautiful, and the profusion of *Phœnix* palms of all sizes presented a unique tropical picture. A large clearance formed an ideal pasturage, crossed and recrossed by innumerable tracks of wild hogs, hippopotami, elephants, and other animals.

On the 21st of April one of our hunters enriched our collection with a splendid male specimen of a rare monkey, *Colobus satanas*, and on the same day I took leave of my kind host, and followed in Mildbraed's

footsteps towards our next stopping-place : the second collecting station lying in our path.

For the last part of the journey the road rose gradually, until we had reached a height of nearly three thousand feet. This, according to the map, was the N'dem mountain, and my "boy" Musa informed me that this was the site of a former Kunabembe and Bumbum village, which had been vacated after strenuous fighting with the N'dzimus. So here was another instance of two not very distant tribes placing the widest possible belt of uninhabited country between their respective villages.

I found Mildbraed in Herr Passehl's house in the recently established collecting station. He had just returned from an excursion to a most interesting prairie, where he had found some wonderful tree-orchids. Soon after my arrival he set off again with his caravan.

I was unable to walk owing to a wound in my foot, and I was obliged to delay starting until the 25th of April. Fortunately only two days' march separated me from the nearest village, so that I had no difficulty in providing for my men. Herr Passehl was a most entertaining companion, and like Herr Funck, seemed to possess all the requisite qualities for living in such a remote spot. Shortly before our arrival he had an adventure with a leopard, which had penetrated into his kitchen, and being driven into a corner by the natives, had broken all the crockery.

The lesser rainy season had now thoroughly set in, and the intervals of fine weather became shorter and shorter. I was anxious to reach Lomie as soon as possible, for I hoped at last to receive letters from home ; so far an inexplicable chain of mishaps had

prevented me from obtaining them, except on one occasion.

Two fatiguing days' march, however, still lay before us, and the men soon became utterly exhausted owing to the constant stooping, stumbling, and climbing along the rough and slippery path. A monotonous undergrowth of *Aframomum* bushes shut out the view, and drenched us with water, even when the rain had momentarily ceased.

At length, about noon on the second day, the scene changed. At a camping-place recently vacated by Mildbraed, I reached what was evidently an important floral boundary.

A small, clear stream, bordered by a beautiful raphia jungle (illus. 158), separated two forest regions so entirely different in appearance that one could almost fancy that the whim of some giant gardener had taken up two plots of jungle from different parts of Africa and placed them here side by side. In marked contrast to the previous dearth of flowers, the forest on the further side of the stream displayed such a marvellous wealth of vegetation that it could not have escaped the notice even of the most casual observer. Shortly afterwards I came upon Mildbraed, who confirmed my observations, and expressed his delight at having at last found so promising a field for botanical research.

It is certainly remarkable that such an insignificant stream should form so definite a floral boundary, which might more reasonably have been expected to coincide with the flooded banks of the Bumba River. (Illus. 159.)

It took a whole hour to cross this river, owing to the small capacity of the two available canoes, which had to be handled with caution on account of the rapidity of the current. Soon afterwards we came

to numerous scattered houses which are all included under the name of Assobam, and the presence of European factories proved that we were in the centre of an important rubber district. A little later I found Mildbraed, who had taken up his abode in one of the houses of the station of Assobam. A considerable portion of the journey through the jungle now lay behind us.

CHAPTER XXIII

ASSOBAM TO EBOLOWA

IN spite of the fertility of the soil, the wilderness through which we had recently travelled, as well as many rich tracts of forest land farther east, are almost devoid of culture, and afford a striking contrast, such as are so frequently encountered in Africa, with the country round Assobam. Here, as far as the eye can see, the land is cultivated in every direction, and is crowded with villages belonging to the North-West N'dzimus. Here and there, in the hollows, small portions of the primeval forest remain intact, but the rising ground is entirely covered with plantations.

There is always a wealth of bird life wherever the original vegetation has disappeared, and flocks of black storks have made their homes in the few, isolated trees which, after the rest of the ground was cleared, remained as witnesses to the former existence of a primeval forest.

We had to turn our attention in the first place to the preservation of the treasures that we had already collected, for the air was very damp owing to the almost incessant rain. Mildbraed had great difficulty in drying his "hay," and I spent a good deal of time in ethnological research, for which Assobam offers a highly interesting field.

The difficulties under which the Constabulary in years gone by fought the cannibal N'dzimus, N'yems

and Makas in this weather-trap, must have been considerable. I learned from the vivid narratives of the negroes, who had witnessed the fight with the Makas on the banks of the Longmapfog, how admirably the natives were protected by the hydrographical situation of their villages. My curiosity was stimulated by what I heard from eye-witnesses, though their story was probably supplemented from their imagination. They spoke of a high-lying marsh, a land full of swamps, accessible only by means of narrow canoes, small enough to navigate the deep channels that are bordered by green, treacherous bogs ready to engulf the unwary. Overshadowing everything is the inhospitable jungle. It must indeed have been a wearisome and thankless task to pursue the fierce Makas, familiar as they were with the labyrinth of channels, along which they shot their tiny canoes at the speed of a galloping horse.

I was eager to explore this district, but was obliged to relinquish the idea for two reasons. In the first place we were already overdue, according to the time allotted to our journey, and in the second place there were all kinds of rumours current which were credited by Europeans as well as negroes, and which made it quite clear that an expedition into the heart of the Maka district was not to be thought of. Later on I came to the conclusion that some of the districts through which we waded on the plateau, in the bend of the Djah, supplied a sufficiently correct impression of this country which was closed to us for political reasons. At any rate, neither Mildbraed nor I had the least desire to make the acquaintance of any more swamps.

The above-mentioned rumours referred to a European agent of an English factory who was said to have been murdered and eaten five days before my arrival in



159. Crossing the Bumba.



160. Giant creeper in the forest.

Assobam. He had paid no attention to a warning in the shape of a human finger that was placed on his washhand-stand one morning. Opinions were divided as to the exact spot where these events had taken place. Some people asserted that the N'yems were the murderers, others insisted that the Maka district was the scene of action, while others again accused the Kakas. It was impossible for me to test the truth of these rumours, although personally I inclined to the belief that the Kakas were responsible, as I had already heard in Dalugene the story of the amputated finger.

When one remembers the authenticated occurrences of the past year, one is bound to admit that these rumours did not sound altogether improbable. The cannibal orgies of the Makas were well known, in which hundreds of people were sacrificed, and which provoked relentless fighting. Then there was the murder of a European merchant, which occurred only a few months before our arrival in the country. The last doubt as to the truth of the rumours disappeared when we learned that the governor of Lomie and the government physician, as well as Dr Schuhmacher, the district magistrate, were on their way, accompanied by an escort of soldiers, to investigate the cause of all these wild reports.

I recalled the warning of the amputated finger, expressing as it did the mystical tendency of the natives, when I was told in Assobam that in a neighbouring village *N'gi* festivities were in progress. In this mystical ceremonial human legs and skulls play an important part, an instance of crass ignorance only equalled by the belief in witchcraft of the Middle Ages. I heard of this *N'gi* first from a trader named Pilz,

from Besam, who met me in the Kunabembe district, and showed me an extraordinary photograph which corroborated part of his narrative. *N'gi* is the name for a gorilla among the hunting tribes, so there is probably an intimate connection between this word and the ideal of a devil. The *N'gi* superstition has travelled a long way. It originated in the country inhabited by the Pangwe tribes on the upper N'tem (Campo), and, according to one of my men, Samba, the N'tum, it spread through the Bules to the N'yems and N'dzimus. The original ceremonies have gradually changed, and the only element essential to the whole thing lies in the speculation of the crafty "medicine men" and chiefs on the stupidity and superstition of the other natives. A participant in the *N'gi* ceremonial is safeguarded from attacks on his life, and the fidelity of his wives is guaranteed. Any *N'gt* misconduct, when detected, is severely punished by the Government, and rightly so, for it is obvious that every sort of extortion, blackmail, and even murder goes hand in hand with this superstition. An English trader assured Mildbraed that under no circumstances would he spend the night in a village where *N'gi* magic was in progress, since he could do so only at the imminent risk of his life.

We were unable to anticipate the vagaries of the weather, for the prognostications by which we regulated our march were seldom justified. The very day that Mildbraed set his caravan in motion in the direction of Lomie a storm came on soon after he had started, from which I too suffered in the old station house at Assobam, the roof being by no means water-tight.

After the rain had ceased I received a visit from a Pygmy, the first I had seen for a long time, and the

most extraordinary looking member of this race that I have ever come across, his features resembling those of a native of Malay.

My short stay in Assobam had afforded me much interesting ethnological information, and it was with considerable satisfaction at the results of my visit that I set off towards Lomie. We marched for several hours through beautiful forest country until we arrived at the village of Malén, where my men were to take up their quarters for the night.

On the way I had an unexpected pleasure. A messenger from Lomie met me in the forest and gave me the packet of letters that I had been eagerly awaiting for many months. At first I thought of waiting to open them until I reached Malén, but the longing for home news prevailed. I set up my deck chair in the midst of the jungle and, deaf to all around me, buried myself in the contents of my letters and cards, which had been accumulating for so long that they formed a perfect mountain. My "boys" watched me impatiently as I read on for nearly two hours, whilst clouds of gay butterflies settled unnoticed on my letters, hands and coat.

Among my letters was one from von Wiese, with the astonishing news that the Duke, with Professors Haberer and Heims, had given up their original plan, and having explored Lake Tchad, were on their way to the coast. From von Wiese's letter I learned also of the tragic fate that had befallen our gallant dogs, who had been such entertaining comrades on the journey out. When, late in the afternoon, I reached my tent at Malén, I felt in the mood to answer all my letters on the spot, but I had so much work to do in sorting and labelling specimens that I was obliged to forego

this pleasure. The following morning I met a police officer on his way to Assobam, accompanied by eight soldiers, and he informed me that he was deputed to investigate the rumours of murder that I had already heard in Assobam.

The village of Man, where I intended to camp that night, was described by my "Bules" as "Minnegatown," that is to say, a woman's village, because a woman here filled the office of chief. As I approached the wretched hamlet, an old woman came out to meet me. She endeavoured to maintain a military carriage, and took off her slouch hat to me. The latter being the emblem of office of a chief, I could no longer doubt that the principle of women's emancipation had triumphed in this cannibal village. There are, however, several chieftainesses, and later on I came across a young woman who held this post, and did the honours in the most dignified manner possible. Moreover, it was always good policy to give presents to the wives of the chiefs, the result being the smoothing away of all difficulties.

The provisions supplied to my men by the chieftainess of Man were scanty, and even at a high price there was little to be found in the neighbourhood, so that I was inclined to credit the assertions of my bearers that here, as so often happens in the forest districts, the natives had some other plantation hidden away somewhere in the jungle.

Strips of virgin forest alternating with newly established or forsaken farms, recently built villages, and abandoned village sites, new factories, and old ones falling into ruin, with here and there the cross denoting the grave of a European, symbolised the restless change brought about by the frenzied search

for rubber. A wide, shadeless road, on which the scorching tropical sun blazed down, traversed this ever-changing landscape. In the neighbourhood of Lomie especially, where the road is about thirty feet wide, I was struck by the contrast between this broad street and the jungle path from Yukaduma to Asso-bam, the discomforts of which were still fresh in my memory.

I reached Lomie on the 1st of May, and was received by the secretary, Lutz, who, in the absence of the District-Governor, was in charge of the station, and who entertained Mildbraed and me most hospitably for a whole week. Before we left we made the acquaintance of the District Magistrate, Dr Schuhmacher, and of the station physician, Dr Rautenberg, who told us that the rumours of a native rising had proved to be imaginary. The European said to have been murdered was alive and well, and in all the alarmist reports that had caused such excitement throughout the whole district, there proved to be not a particle of truth !

Accustomed as we were to the modest station buildings of Molundu, and to bark factories which we looked upon as the height of luxury, we were amazed at the solidity of the Lomie houses. The new fortress of Lomie stands in a commanding position in the midst of a clearance about half a mile square. Solidly built of brick, it is impregnable as far as native weapons are concerned. The District-Governor's residence is a large square building, the lower part of which is used as an office. Various comfortable bark and palm-leaf buildings stand outside the fortress, also the attractive two-storied brick house belonging to the District Magistrate, all of them surrounded by luxuriant gardens and plantations. In the gardens are all kinds of vege-

tables, and between the houses avenues of mangoes, oranges, lemons and guavas; there is, moreover, one small coffee plantation.

We were very glad to be living in solid brick houses instead of under canvas, for day after day violent thunderstorms broke over the station. Mildbraed kept his bed owing to an attack of fever, which, however, speedily yielded to treatment.

Thanks to Dr Schuhmacher's kind assistance, I made the acquaintance of some more "Ebayeggas," who were of a quite different type to the Pygmies of Molundu and Momos. They were somewhat nervous on entering the fortress, but as soon as I welcomed them in their own tongue, they recovered from their nervousness, and readily answered my questions. These were the last dwarfs that I came across who understood their ancient language; the next members of a pygmy tribe with whom I came in contact, not far from the coast, had entirely forgotten it.

During the few sunny hours with which we were favoured, I had a very interesting ornithological experience. On three separate occasions, namely, the 5th, 6th, and 8th of May, I recognised, high up in the air, some well-known bird voices. These proved to proceed from flights of our swifts, *Micropus apus*, circling with characteristic cry high above us, and then disappearing rapidly in a north-easterly direction.

Mildbraed placed great reliance on the botanical zeal of his faithful Ekomeno, who staggered home several times a day carrying a heavy load of specimens. One day he brought in a piece of liana, about six feet long, which he held in a u-shaped position. It was the famous creeper, belonging to the *Dilleniaceæ* family, from which the natives obtain a sufficient quantity

of water when no other liquid is available. When we untied the piece of liana and held up one end, a stream of water ran out, as if from a fountain. We collected nearly a pint of perfectly clear drinking water. Later on Undene called my attention to another plant with the same property though to a lesser degree; this was the umbrella tree, which, when bored above its candelabra-like aerial roots, yields, in a comparatively short time, a supply of excellent drinking water.

Meanwhile we had completed all our preparations for our westward march. We succeeded in inducing a few of the N'dzimus, who had accompanied us from Yukaduma, to proceed as far as Sangmelima. The remaining N'dzimus were replaced by Bules, both men and women, who had brought loads from Ebolowa to Lomie and were anxious to return home.

Owing to his recent attack of fever, Mildbraed was not yet fit for much exertion, so this time I started first, and on the 10th of May took leave of our hospitable friends at Lomie. After marching for a short time across open country, my caravan once more vanished into the jungle, from the edge of which I took a final farewell of the beautifully situated station.

The road leading to Bidjum is one of the best in the whole of the Cameroons. (Illus. 161.) Sergeant-Major Schwan, who constructed it, did not fall into the error of cutting down the big trees on each side of the road. When this is done the underwood has an opportunity of growing luxuriantly, and much labour is required in order to keep the road clear.

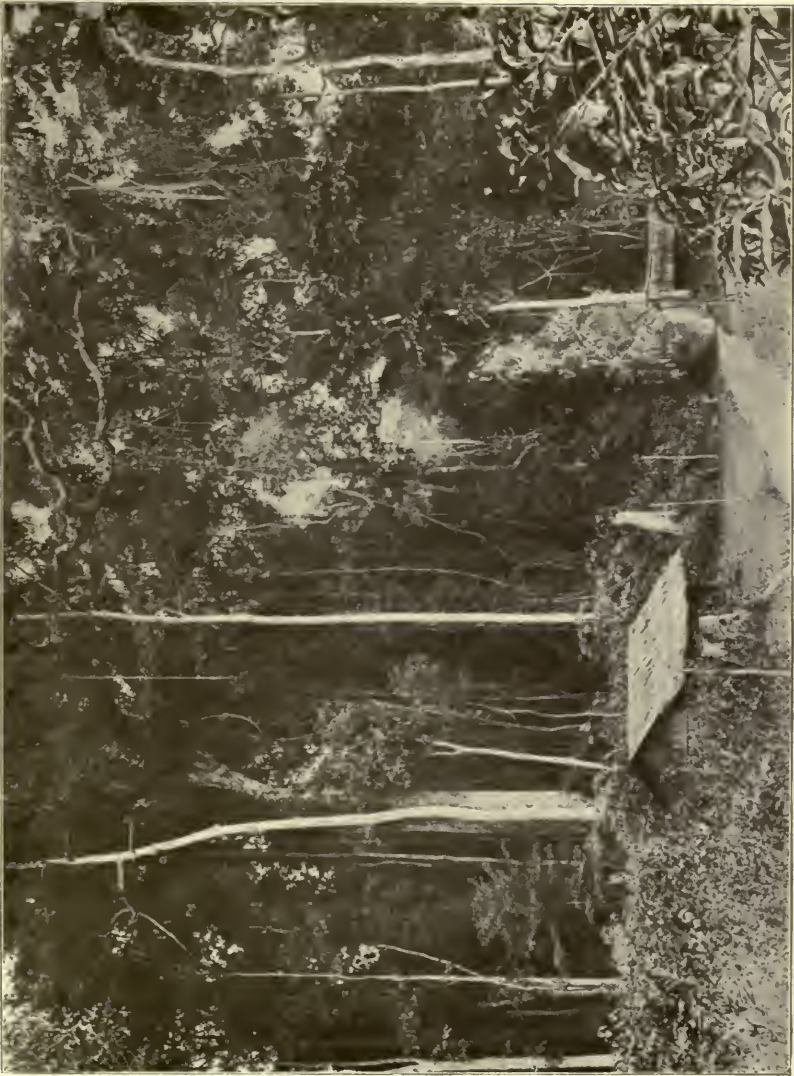
The road is from six to ten feet wide, according as the exigencies of the forest permit; it is almost level, and all the streams have been carefully bridged over. Marching through the jungle on a road as

smooth as that of a park was a real pleasure, each turn revealing new beauties of the landscape. Luxuriant rotang lianas stretched from one tree trunk to the other; light-green tree-ferns varied the sombre depths of the glades, whilst here and there in the under-wood were vivid patches of scarlet. The trees were all bursting into leaf, and the foliage displayed the most uncommon tints: gold, crimson, scarlet and purple.

Unfortunately the vagaries of the rainy season somewhat spoiled our enjoyment. On the second day's march we were overtaken by a violent thunder-storm, the peals of thunder being almost continuous, like some great explosion. The persistent downpour could scarcely be called mere rain; it seemed rather as if sheets of water were falling from the sky. One needs to be in the open air in order to realise the violence of a tropical shower. In the space of a few minutes the road was converted into a raging torrent, and the bare feet of the bearers could obtain no hold on the slippery stones, so that they kept on falling down with their heavy loads.

In such weather the "rest-houses," placed at intervals along the road, are most welcome, for a tent affords little shelter against torrential rain. These halting-places along the Bidjum road are for the most part surrounded by extensive *cassada* plantations, cultivated by the Government. They take the place of the former villages, which, at the time of the N'yem risings, were the scene of many deeds of blood.

On the 12th of May we reached a wide, cultivated area, planted with young *kickxia* trees, on the outskirts of the station of Djah. We could not distinguish any details, for the rain shut out the view and gave every-



161. Forest track on the road from Djah to Bogen.



162 and 163. Maka cannibals.

thing a blurred appearance. The great rubber trees loomed like ghosts through the steam that rose from the ground, and there were also a few gigantic examples of *Mimusops djave*, whose towering summits, covered with epiphytes, rose to a dizzy height.

In spite of the unfavourable weather, the governor of the station, Herr Rappe, came some way to meet me, and conducted me to the guest house. On the way I caught sight of three strange-looking men, of a deep black colour, with blue beads in their hair, which was curled like that of a woman. (Illus. 162, 163.) I was informed that they were Makas, convicts from the cannibal villages, who had taken part in the last rising, and had murdered an unarmed white trader. They scowled at my camera, but were obliged to submit to its evil magic, which they probably looked upon as a partial atonement for their crimes.

A mysterious animal was mentioned to me by Herr Rappe, and I heard of it also on a subsequent occasion in another place. The natives called it "Bung-Bung," and it was said to be very rare. It was so strong that it could kill a leopard, and my informant added that he had recently found a leopard that had evidently been killed by some wild animal, this animal being, in the opinion of the natives, a "Bung-Bung." We could not make out what kind of creature it could be, for the natives had other names for every animal we mentioned. As a last resource, I applied to Undene, who replied without a moment's hesitation: "Massa, Bung-Bung be Bule name for lion."

We were speechless with astonishment! If we had been told that okapis were to be found in the neighbourhood, we could not have been more surprised. Further questions elicited from Undene the information that

lions are occasionally, though very rarely, present in the jungle, that they remain hidden in the densest part of the thicket, where they lie in wait for any animal for which they are a match, and that they are very seldom seen, since no native would venture to hunt them. Although I had always found Undene's zoological statements quite reliable, I had my doubts as to the presence in the jungle of an animal that is supposed to be restricted to the desert, the latter being approximately three hundred miles from the bend of the Djah. At that time the distance of the desert was the only point which I took into consideration with regard to the possible presence of a lion in the jungle ; later on, however, I came to look upon the matter from another point of view.

It is easy to understand the hydrographical distribution of the region enclosed by the Upper N'yong, the Dume, the Bumba, and the Aina rivers, when one takes into consideration the almost complete absence of any slope on this immense plateau, together with the impervious, and in parts loamy, nature of the soil covering the rock. It is obvious how hard it must have been for these watercourses to decide in which direction to flow. Often, especially in the case of the smaller streams, the current is so weak as to be well-nigh imperceptible, like that of the sluggish rivulets of our fens. Like most rivers on a slight incline, they show, with few exceptions, a marked tendency to form an intricate maze of meanderings, and the rivulets that give rise to an immense swamp are often quite insignificant. In some districts the Government has, at great expense, bridged the black morass with roads made of round logs, which are a great boon to the traveller.

Here in these swamps is to be found the explanation

of the peculiar hue of the Congo. Every rivulet is brownish in colour; in most of them the water, although perfectly clear, is of a deep coffee brown, and becomes inky black in the stagnant places. The substances which give rise to this peculiar colouration are formed during the decomposition of various plants growing in the swamps; probably the raphia palms and tree-ferns are mainly responsible, since the more they predominate on the banks, the more pronounced is the discolouration of the water. (Illus. 164.)

The acidity of the soil, which gives rise to so permanent a dye, has evidently another important chemical effect; on the river banks, beneath the thick layer of black mud, there is almost always a stratum of greyish-white, or even snow-white, kaolin, which gradually gives place to the underlying stone. The natives make use of this kaolin as a white dye, and also as an admirable fire-proof material for the nozzles of their bellows.

On the 13th of May I left the Djah station, and entered upon a vast swamp, over which a log road had been constructed, and through which the Djah meandered, its current strengthened by the recent rains.

We marched for hours through monotonous forest land, composed almost exclusively of umbrella-trees and dismal *Aframomum* underwood, all of which was at one time under cultivation.

Some of the N'yem villages stretched on each side of the road, others were rectangular and were built round a blind alley opening off the road, thus betraying the influence of the Bules. (Illus. 165.)

I was struck by the well set up figures and classical heads of these villagers, who were superior in this

respect to any that I had seen up to the present. (Illus. 168.) In the village of Madyu I was tempted to attribute to a hamitic origin the finely-cut noses and small lips of the inhabitants, notwithstanding their dark skin, and it was hard to realise that I was face to face with one of the most savage cannibal tribes in Africa.

Some of the children were particularly attractive, although the girls were lamentably disfigured by having had their noses pierced. (Illus. 170.) The women's dress betrayed the influence of the hunting tribes, chiefly the Bules, not so much in the imitation of their fantastic coiffure as in the adoption of the highly becoming *Ebui*.

An *ebui* consists of a thick bunch of raphia fibres, bound together in the form of a horse's tail, and is one of the most tasteful of all the adornments worn by negresses. So long as the women are young and slim, there is no better means of enhancing their beauty than the graceful swaying of this appendage. (Illus. 173.)

There was nothing to recall the bloody battles of the insurrection; everything pointed to sensual enjoyment and the joy of life. During the moonlight nights of the middle of May, men, women, and children made merry with singing and dancing, the dances being more empasioned than any that I had previously witnessed.

Although, according to the meteorological tables for the South Cameroons, the so-called "lesser rainy season" should long ago have come to an end, not a day passed without torrents of rain which were more of the nature of water-spouts than ordinary showers. This naturally caused the rivers to rise, and in spite

of the numerous log bridges that spanned the rivers and submerged tracts, our route was in consequence considerably prolonged. Two streams, the Biabulo and the Li, which during the dry season are mere rivulets, now formed one large lake, and though this state of affairs was evidently anticipated, the bridges being prolonged on both sides into a log road, yet we were obliged to wade for some distance through the brown water.

The few hours of sunshine that brightened these rainy days were accompanied by an almost unbearably sultry heat, which favoured the development of every description of insect life. The fluttering of myriads of gaudy butterflies, all apparently intent on quenching their thirst, produced an incomparable play of colours. *Epitolas*, attired in vivid blue, glittered like living sapphires; whole clouds of the vermilion-tinted *Cymothoe sangaris* sucked up water from evil-smelling pools by the roadside, not allowing even a passing shower to interrupt their enjoyment; while even more absorbed in quenching their thirst were the swallow-tails (*Papilio machaon*), thronging the smallest puddles in dense, moving clouds, and permitting nothing to distract them from their occupation. (Illus. 120, 122.) All these butterflies were surpassed by the giant *Antimachus* appearing for a moment between the fronds of the tree-fern that arched over the road, and soaring away in its wonderful bird-like flight with a scarcely perceptible beat of its wings. Insect-life was just then at its zenith; a few days later their numbers had sensibly diminished, and within a month they had died out. The jungle lay silent and lifeless, and its vast glades seemed to contain no living thing; even the chirping of the grasshoppers had ceased.

The nearer we came to the most westerly point of the bend of the Djah, the more marked was the influence of the Bules on the N'yem tribe, until at length there was no visible difference in their appearance. The tatooing of their bodies was exactly similar to that of the Bules, as was also the hairdressing of the women, which was more fantastic than anything I had seen up to the present. (Illus. 169.)

Infinite patience is required for the construction of these works of art, and the necessary adjuncts are multifarious: rotang sticks for a foundation, false hair, vegetable fibres, with nails, beads and buttons for the trimming. All these various "foreign bodies" are incorporated with the natural hair into a coiffure, which must be very uncomfortable for the wearer; it is invariably infested with vermin—what my Yaunde "boy," Elume, called "small beef"—and at night it must be protected by resting the neck on a specially constructed support. When, however, his vanity is at stake, a negro will submit to more discomforts than the most fastidious European, his thick skin and physical insensibility undoubtedly playing an important part.

One of the most noteworthy results of Bule influence is the introduction of the oil palm, which has, however, not long been cultivated in this district. In the village of Mokumelo was the first example of this important tree that I had seen for many months, from which we may conclude that the oil palm crossed the Djah about twenty-five years ago, and is very slowly penetrating towards the East.

It was in Mokumelo, my last halting-place in the N'yem district, that we made preparations for traversing the last uninhabited jungle region that lay before us.



164. Tree ferns on the edge of a swampy water-course in the forest.



165. N'yem village.



166. Stilt roots.

Our first consideration was to provide ourselves with sufficient provisions for our journey through this "dead" district, and this was accomplished without any difficulty. But I had little confidence in the promises of the chief that he would send out men to clear the road for us. Even the Mokumelo people admitted that the road that lay before me was not above reproach.

I set out on the 19th of May; at first the road did not seem to justify my fears; but half an hour later it began to get steadily worse. There was not much to be seen of the promised "road repairs," although here and there tree-trunks had been thrown across the worst parts of the morass. A quarter of an hour later even these improvements came to an end, and we plunged resignedly into the appalling bog, which provided a three days' martyrdom for the stumbling, staggering bearers. There was no question of marching, we could only spring from one root to another, clamber over fallen trees, and balance our steps on large branches that lay in the bog, into which we continually slipped and fell.

The first two days were the worst, and we had a long search before we could find a suitable camping ground. On the second day I was much astonished when we suddenly emerged upon a small open space like the clearance in the neighbourhood of Yendi. The ground consisted of lichen-covered slate, with occasional patches of turf diffusing a fragrant scent of heather; there were tiny flowers among the short grass, including clumps of a blue *Utricularia*, resembling the butterwort of our European mountains. After marching so long through the gloomy swamps of the jungle, it was an unexpected pleasure to be once more

on terra firma, and to be able to rest one's eyes on the fresh green grass. I encamped at the edge of this open space, whence I enjoyed a full view of all the flowering summits of the tall forest trees.

The last stage of our journey through the "dead" jungle area was characterised by a succession of hills alternating with swampy depressions, until, late in the afternoon, we reached the first Bule village.

This village was called N'lo-Bessege, and my men were by this time so utterly exhausted that I was obliged to give them a day's rest, although the difficulties of obtaining sufficient food in this newly established outpost of the Bule district were considerable.

Now that we were in Bule territory my zoological studies fell into the background, and this was also the case with regard to Mildbraed's botanical collecting. We were in a country that had been cultivated for many years, and where the jungle was being cleared farther and farther from the settlements. Clean, well-kept Bule villages cover the landscape in every direction, many of them separated only by the watercourses. It is only on the banks of the rivers and streams that the original forest, with its wealth of animal and plant life, is still to be found.

Whereas in the paths of the jungle we often did not know how to make our way through the bogs and morasses, here we marched through farms and villages, most of them lying in the shade of oil palms, and all very much alike. (Illus. 171.) The roads were covered with fragrant *Citronella* grass, and were exposed to the pitiless rays of the tropical sun. Under these circumstances we went forward as rapidly as possible, for there was nothing worth collecting to be seen by the roadside. Mildbraed, especially, found this country



167. Coiffure of a Bule woman.



168. N'yem man.



169. Coiffure of a N'yem woman.



170. N'yem girls on the Djah.

a botanical desert, and advanced so rapidly that he caught me up in Kungulu, before I had even reached the Djah.

From Kungulu I made an excursion to the neighbouring village of Bitje, the residence of an American named Bates, who supplied the South Kensington Museum with its best West African curiosities.

When the natives discovered that I was collecting zoological specimens, they brought me all kinds of animals in the hope of receiving a reward. In particular they brought large numbers of *Goliath* beetles, with their white velvet markings.

I had already come across these huge insects in great quantities some years before, on the Mungo. They showed the same peculiarities here in the South Cameroons, but they appeared at a different time of year. These splendid beetles are always found amongst the large-leaved *Vernonia* bushes growing at the edge of the jungle. (Illus. 123.) They settle in colonies on the branches of this shrub in order to feed on its sap. They are easily caught early in the morning; later on the slightest movement of a branch is sufficient to disperse them, the whole colony flying off with a loud buzzing. The sound of their flight, even at a considerable altitude, cannot easily be mistaken, and resembles the noise made by the string of a bass-viol when it is set in vibration. Mildbraed compared it to the humming of an air-ship's propellor.

On the 28th of May I took leave of Mildbraed at Kungulu, and crossed the swollen waters of the Djah, on the banks of which the primeval forest stood for some distance under water. (*Vide* coloured illus.) There was only one fragile canoe available, so that it took three hours to get all our baggage across.

The weather still showed no signs of improvement, and all the rivers and streams had overflowed their banks, thus causing us many delays. The winding Libi River, in places over three hundred feet wide, which I had to cross many times during the succeeding days, had converted its banks into swamps, while many streams, under normal conditions quite insignificant, were now so deep that, but for the bridges, they would have been impassible.

All these watercourses resembled those of the left bank of the Djah, the vegetation bordering them was similar, and they contained the same brown, transparent water. This circumstance seemed to me to have an important geological bearing, and induced me to keep an accurate record of the characteristics of all the watercourses that I encountered. I was thus able to establish the fact that they altered their character shortly before I reached Ebolowa, that is to say, long after I had passed out of the water-basin of the Congo.

After crossing the Libi for the first time, I left the main road, and turned aside into the path leading towards Bitje. I was disappointed to find that this path led through a district that had formerly been cultivated; within a day's march of Bitje, however, I entered a large *Macrolobium* forest, such as I had not seen since leaving Bangandu. But the hopes thus conjured up with regard to the surroundings of Bitje were doomed to disappointment, for this famous spot lies in the midst of the most uninteresting agricultural district imaginable.

Mr Bates, who owns an extensive rubber plantation near Bitje, was in America at the time of my visit, so that I was obliged to obtain my information elsewhere. I had not long to wait, for soon after my



On the Djah, west of Kungulu



arrival I was visited by some of the village boys, to whose collecting zeal the discovery of many botanical treasures is due. The twelve-year-old son of the chief, in particular, the American collector's invaluable assistant, was indefatigable in answering my questions. From him I learned that the time of year was not now favourable, but that most of the rare specimens had been found in a small wood close to the village. This wood, however, seemed in no way to differ from hundreds that I had already traversed during my journey thither.

Although Bitje by no means fulfilled my hopes as a collecting centre, it afforded me a far deeper insight into the manners and customs of the Bules than any of the villages through which I had passed.

In a neighbouring hamlet I was initiated into a curious religious ceremony of the Bules, adopted, so I was informed, from the Pangwes, and designated by the name of "Sso." I observed at the side of the road a thickly plaited hedge, which seemed to have been constructed in order to screen something from view. On the hedge was a peculiar carving representing a hunting scene, flanked on each side by a carved figure, one of a man and the other of a woman.

Samba, the foreman of my bearers, himself a Pangwe, and a tall, sturdy fellow, became grey with terror when I requested him to investigate the place with me. He said that he would immediately die if he were to do such a thing, and prophesied the same fate for me if I paid no attention to his warning. The villagers, however, seemed less nervous, and gave me permission to investigate the place, as soon as I had assured them that I possessed a potent remedy against its magic.

When I stepped behind the screen, I found an open

space on which a small hut was built. In front of the hut stood a few boys, about twelve years of age, painted white with kaolin; these were the famous Sso boys, and that was all there was to be seen! (Illus. 172.) I learned from Samba, who was astonished to see me return alive, that the boys who were dedicated to this worship were obliged to spend four months of every year by themselves in the Sso hut, where they were guilty of every kind of mischief. Every evening they assumed peculiar masks, and showed themselves upon the footpath in order to frighten passers-by. He added that women were never under any circumstances permitted to visit this spot. This was all the information that I could extract from Samba, who was still under the influence of my "dangerous venture," but from the villagers I gathered that the worship had reference to some mysterious deity. For a considerable sum of money I even succeeded in obtaining some of the utensils connected with the ceremonial, but I could not induce the natives to sell me the carved screen. If they were to part with it, they assured me that the Sso boys would infallibly die. I went on my way with my treasures, but Samba could not be induced to carry any of the Sso utensils.

The deeply-rooted superstition of the hunting tribes, of which the Bule is the most important, seem far to surpass that of the N'yems, N'dzimus, or any other Bantu tribe; on the other hand, the former possess many good qualities not to be found among the latter. For instance, the agricultural industry of the Bules, and the remarkable cleanliness of their villages, point to the high grade of culture evinced by the hunting tribes. Moreover, their physical development, together with their whole demeanour, betoken a more civilised



171. Bule village.



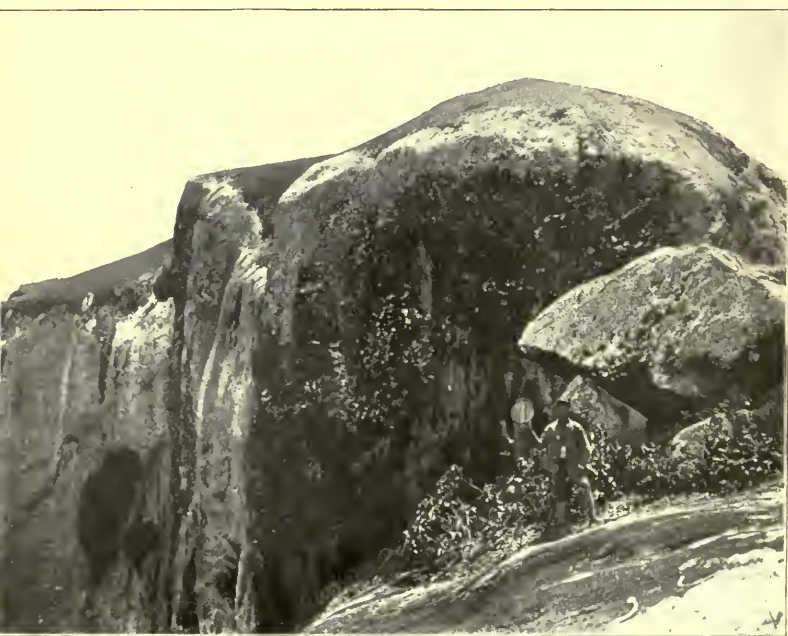
172. Socua boys in front of their hut.



173. Girl with double ebui.



174. Bule maidens.



175. The Masesso rock

race. Some of the women, in particular, possess very intelligent faces, as well as figures with the most classical outline. (Illus. 174.) The Bitje chieftain's wife, in spite of her advancing years, might rank as a beauty, her pleasant, almost Caucasian, features harmonising admirably with her quiet, dignified manner, so that it was hard to realise that I was in the presence of a negress. (Illus. 176, 177.)

Often on a moonlight night, in camp or in our village quarters, at the close of the day's work, I had watched with interest the dancing of the Bule bearers, but the dances that I witnessed here in their own land were even more striking. The songs that accompanied the dancing were wonderfully melodious, and gave evidence of the trained ear for music which is a characteristic of all the hunting tribes.

My Bule natives were continually praising the superiority of their country, of which they were inordinately proud, and in many respects I was obliged to agree with them. This cultivated region, although barren from the scientist's point of view, was very pleasant to travel in. There were none of the difficulties of obtaining provisions which elsewhere often occasioned the greatest anxiety; here the rich plantations were more than sufficient for the wants of my bearers. There was a profusion of bananas; beautiful pineapples could be purchased for a few pence, and fresh eggs were very plentiful.

The travelling facilities that we enjoyed were certainly due in part to the admirable organisation regulated by the authorities at Ebolowa, the government station. Every chief was supplied with a small book, containing all the information that could possibly be required by the European traveller: the names of the tribe,

of the village, and of the chief, and, above all, the exact price of the provisions grown in the district, thus facilitating the negotiations as to the correct payment for the food supplied.

After leaving Bitje we traversed a district covered with flourishing banana and manioc plantations, well-kept villages, and broad, sunny roads, interrupted only by brown streams, each of which were spanned by log bridges.

On the 2nd of June, soon after we had regained the main road to Ebolowa, and had passed through the village of Le, four lofty mountains suddenly came into view. They disappeared behind the trees, reappearing at intervals. At last we were close to the foot of the Djukun Mountain, when suddenly my interest was diverted to a huge, bare rock, rising up on our left in the middle of the forest. (Illus. 175.) The name of this immense granite rock is Masesse, and it excited my curiosity to such an extent that I set out at once to climb to the top. At times I was obliged to scramble up on all fours, and finally I had to crawl through a narrow tunnel in pitch darkness, whence I emerged into the sunlight. The sparkling rock glowed under the rays of the sun, covered here and there by strange mountain plants and by cushions of pineapples that must have come here by accident and then propagated themselves. The weather had separated the upper layers of the rock, which lay in thick scales on the main mass, sounding beneath our feet like a cracked bell.

There is a wonderful view from the top of this rugged mass of stone. In the foreground rise the grim outlines of the Masesse itself, behind which the jungle unfolds itself in all its exotic beauty. The eye strays over

the summits of the giant trees, until it rests on the imposing mountains in the background: the Djukun, the still loftier M'bang, in the direction of Sangmelima, and many other peaks.

My boots were not adapted for mountaineering, so that it was out of the question to try and reach the highest point, which was separated from me by a deep cleft. A villager told me many interesting facts regarding this "entrance into another world," which I proceeded to investigate as closely as possible. I encountered a cold blast of air and a peculiar mouldy smell. None of the Bule natives who had accompanied me could be induced to follow me any further. I slid cautiously towards the slippery walls of the "chimney," which was quite dark. There was a loud rushing noise due to the numerous bats that flew away as I approached. However, I was soon obliged to turn back, as there was nothing further to be seen, and every step without a lantern was fraught with danger.

It was no easy task to distinguish the truth from the fantastic tales of the natives. In the village I learned that there were one or two people in the neighbourhood who were acquainted with a subterranean path leading out of the Masesse, and that, after crawling and sliding along it for an hour, they had come out upon an open grass-grown space. It was, however, very easy to lose one's way, as there were many holes and pools.

I instructed the chief to find me a man who, in consideration for a generous reward, would be willing to show me the way through the Masesse, and in the meantime I made the ascent of the Djukun.

The Djukun is famous on account of the numerous chimpanzees by which it is inhabited. I did not

succeed in catching sight of any of these animals, though I repeatedly heard them roaring. I also found several of their nests, which consist of a heap of branches wedged into the fork of a tree.

The following morning I rose early in order to attempt the passage of the subterranean path. From the top of the rock my guide pointed out the grass patch on to which it opened, and I realised at once that the native imagination had played a considerable part in the narrative of the previous day, for the exit was quite close to the foot of the rock. I came to the conclusion that it would be much easier to negotiate the chimney from below upwards, and I accordingly made my way to the famous grass patch. The rain was falling in torrents, but I soon made out the lower opening in the rock. The chimney was full of bats, of which I killed seven at one shot. By the light of two lanterns we began the ascent, and after ten minutes' hard climbing we reached the top. The passage was unpleasant rather than dangerous, and my clothes suffered so severely from the bat guano that I must have looked as if I had been bathing in a bog.

In most unfavourable weather we continued our journey the same day. The road was converted into a brick-red coloured pond, the soil being so impervious that the rain could not penetrate. The rain-clouds hung about the mountain tops, and broke at short intervals in heavy showers. I therefore made up my mind to spend the night in the little village of Asén, our last encampment before reaching Sangmelima.

The sun was shining when we set off the next morning in the direction of Sangmelima, but the atmosphere was so oppressive that I felt sure the rainy season was not yet at an end. After marching for several



176. Bule woman Menge from Bitje.

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Buletrane "Menoe", Frau des Hainplungs
 des Bule (bei Sammelung) vollkommener Fül-
 befige, Mutter von 4 Kindern. Bule 31 Mai 11
 1891
 1892
 1893
 1894
 1895
 1896
 1897
 1898
 1899
 1900

hours we caught sight of the station, which stands on a hill, and is surrounded by cultivated fields and india-rubber plantations. On arrival I was received by Lieutenant Harttmann, the head of this important station, and by Mildbraed, who had arrived three days before me.

There was a great deal to be done during my stay in Sangmelima; some of the bearers had to be paid off and others engaged in their place. Mildbraed was, of course, ready first, and on the 7th of June he set off once more on the broad caravan road.

I would gladly have spent some time longer in the comfortable station house, but I could not delay my journey when once I had secured the requisite number of bearers. On the 9th of June I took leave of Lieutenant Harttmann, and started on the road leading to Ebolowa.

As I travelled towards the West the country lost its table-land character, and the "akoms," or isolated masses of rock, which became every day more frequent, prepared me to a certain extent for the picturesque mountains that lay before me.

On the first day's march after leaving Sangmelima Undene remarked as we crossed a small stream, "Massa, now them Congo Bush be finished!" He meant that the rivulet which we had crossed was the last that belonged to the Congo basin, and on consulting the map I found that he was right.

It is characteristic of the natives that they are usually well acquainted with the directions of the mountain ranges, and still more with the course of the rivers. Mountains, rivers, forests and villages are the only landmarks that exist for the wandering negroes. If the traveller inquires how far it is to such and such a place,

he is not much the wiser when he is told the distance is so many hills, waters, bushes or towns.

It had become known among the natives that I was collecting ethnological specimens, and they brought me, in consequence, all the household utensils that they could spare, hoping that I would buy them. Like all the hunting tribes, they were very skilful at wood-carving, and some of the things they brought me were most elaborately ornamented.

In other matters, too, the Bules were exceedingly friendly ; they endeavoured to answer all my questions, and stood patiently while I sketched them. They are skilled in the art of tatooing, and although there are certain conventional designs that continually recur, the artist's fancy always introduces new variations, and no two patterns are exactly alike. (Illus. 179.)

The women, too, are most artistic in the way they dress their hair (illus. 167, 181), and although the coiffures of other hunting tribes, especially the Pangwes, are often more fantastic, they are never as artistic as the "ram's horn" erections of the Bules. The latter, combined with the graceful *ebuis*, set off to perfection the beauty of their dark brown figures. (Illus. 178, and coloured illus., page 162.)

On the 12th of June, from the village of Ababita I caught sight for the first time of the beautiful mountain scenery surrounding Ebolowa, and the distant peaks wrapped in a blue mist. As we approached Ebolowa the influence of European culture grew more and more clearly visible. In the villages native workmen, trained by American missionaries in Ebolowa, had provided the houses with well-fitting doors, and other civilised contrivances.

After climbing a long hill, we reached the clean,

recently built village of Ekuk, where we spent the night, and the following day we arrived in Ebolowa.

I had heard that it was a very beautiful town, but all my expectations fell short of the reality. It certainly surpasses every other station in the Cameroons that I have ever seen, and the charm of its surroundings is enhanced by every possible device of architecture and landscape gardening.

Mildbraed had arrived several days before me, and I was glad to recognise an old acquaintance in Lieutenant von Heigelin, the governor of the station. We spent several delightful evenings in his comfortable house and in that of the station physician, Dr Eckert. Both these gentlemen vied with one another in making life in Ebolowa so pleasant that we were quite sorry to take leave of them, when at last all our preparations were complete and we could set out on the final stage of our journey towards the coast.

CHAPTER XXIV

MARCHING FROM EBOLOWA TO THE COAST

OUR Bule carriers, who for nine months had pluckily endured all the hardships and fatigues of the journey, and who were now once more in their own country, could hardly be expected to proceed with us to the coast. All our persuasions failed to induce them to forego the pleasure of immediately rejoining their relatives, after what was in their eyes an interminably long absence. On the day following that of our arrival in Ebolowa they received their well-earned salaries, and, with few exceptions, returned to their homes. The most notable exception was Mildbraed's faithful Ekomeno, who, from the rank of overseer of the bearers, had risen to that of "botanical assistant" and factotum, and who agreed to accompany us as far as Annobon.

We should have had no difficulty in securing the requisite number of bearers to accompany us to the coast in the usual time, and by the ordinary route, via N'gomakak; this, however, was not our intention. Mildbraed wished to make some suitable spot on the road to Kribi his headquarters for a systematic botanical exploration of the mountains near the coast. For my part I had set myself a task, to accomplish which I must travel to the coast by a circuitous route.

I had noticed on the maps at my disposal, just where the N'tem (Campo) River reaches its most northerly

point, a mountain stated to be over five thousand feet high, which seemed to me to be worth exploring. It is true that Herr Hoffmann, the manager of a factory at Ebolowa, believed this mountain, marked on the map as N'kolumbinde, to be non-existent. I decided, however, that this almost unknown district was worth exploring, even if the results proved negative. There was, in any case, an interesting geographical problem to be solved.

Whilst waiting for the necessary number of bearers to be collected, our time was fully occupied in many important matters. Everything that could be dispensed with on the last stage of the journey had to be sent direct to the coast, and it took a long time to pack up, in waterproof material, all our superfluous baggage as well as our collections.

On the 20th of June Mildbraed returned to the village of Ekuk, in order to collect further botanical specimens from the wooded slopes in that neighbourhood, while topographical studies detained me in the immediate vicinity of Ebolowa.

On my arrival I had been struck by the rocky Akak, a rugged, wooded mountain of forbidding aspect, forming the background of the station, and the loftiest mountain in the immediate neighbourhood. I estimated its height at from 3500 to 4000 feet, but was anxious to measure it accurately by means of a boiling-point thermometer and aneroid.

This mountain was said never to have been ascended by a European, and in spite of its apparently convenient situation, the ascent proved not nearly so easy as I had anticipated. The thick covering of trees made it very difficult to judge from a distance the best place at which to start climbing. The indefatigable Undene

was of the greatest assistance to me, in going on ahead to investigate.

The ascent of Mount Akak occupied a whole morning and was a most fatiguing undertaking. The descent actually took half an hour longer than the ascent, owing to the slopes being so steep and slippery. During the Bule rising this mountain was used as a refuge by the natives, and the remains of camp fires were still visible under some of the overhanging rocks. The measurements that I took showed how easy it is to overestimate the height of an isolated and steep mountain, for the Akak proved to be only 2950 feet high.

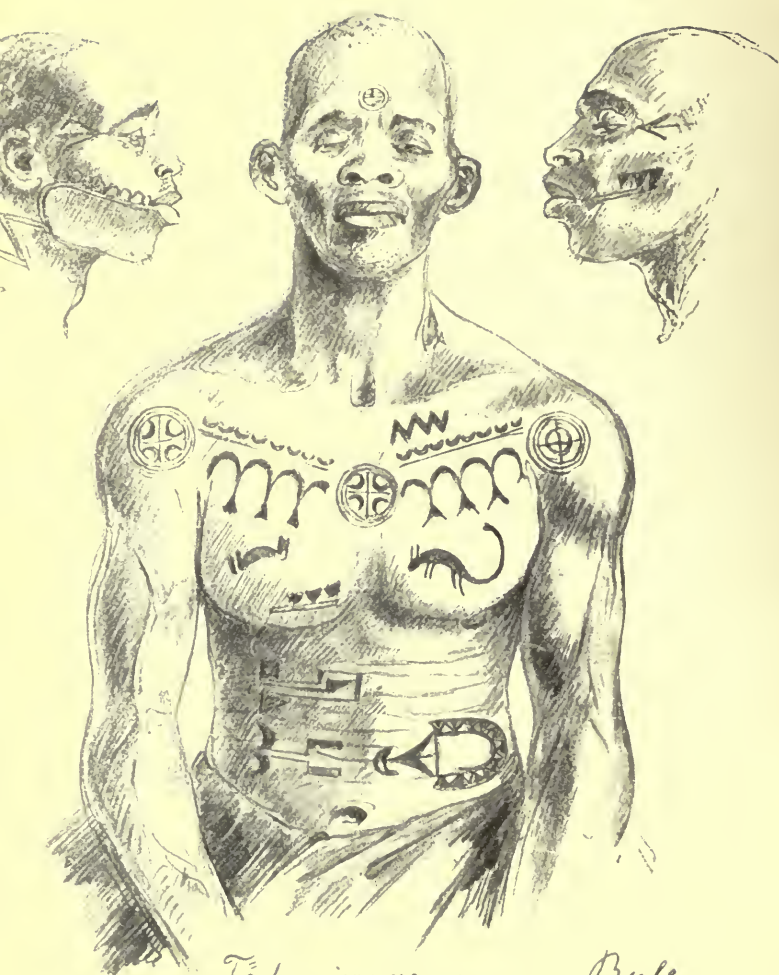
There were one or two interesting varieties among the few plants that I brought back from the summit of Mount Akak. Mildbraed was specially interested in a peculiar stemless plant, *Raphia regalis* Becc., which grew only on the highest part of the mountain, above the sparse underwood.

On the 27th of June all the preparations for my journey were complete, and after taking leave of my kind hosts, I set off towards the South. Mildbraed had not yet returned from Ekuk. Herr Hoffmann accompanied me for some distance, as far as a young *Hevea* plantation belonging to him. The size and flourishing condition of the little trees showed how superior this india-rubber plant is to the indigenous *Kickxia*.

So far the road led through a flat, cultivated district, but from this point onwards the country was undulating, and on the horizon rose a few isolated hills. The villages were of the same character as those in the neighbourhood of Ebolowa, although on the very first day's march we entered the country inhabited



178. Coiffure of a Bule woman.



Tätowierung eines Bule-

Links unten auf dem (Manns),
 Bauch Armborst, Makörn (Ma Kürn)
 die nach einem Mond 9. 6. 11.
 schießt Auf linker
 Brust Eichhörchen, auf rechter Pfeife A. Schultze

by the Pangwes, two sub-tribes of which, the M'weis and the N'tums, are found in the Ebolowa district. During the following weeks I came into close touch with the M'weis and thus became more closely acquainted with the peculiar Pangwe race.

Before I reached my first encampment in the Pangwe country, I accidentally met in his own village, Samba, the bearers' overseer who had recently been paid off. He had spent the money he had earned in getting married, that is to say, in buying a wife, and consequently he was neither able nor willing to help me in collecting specimens. He was not apparently too well pleased to see me, for he had boasted so much about his "town," which, according to his account, was the finest in the whole Ebolowa district. As a matter of fact Samba's "town" was a wretched hole, like most of the villages in that neighbourhood.

As I approached Mapfut, where I intended to spend the night, all the inhabitants ran away in a panic, being apparently under the impression that I was an official seeking workmen for the construction of the railway. Such was their terror that they threw away anything that might hinder them in their headlong flight. We called them back, but in vain. In the preceding village no one had remained excepting a little sick girl, who had been brutally abandoned to her fate. Late in the evening a native ventured to return, and although I had seen with my own eyes the flight of the villagers, he assured me that they had all gone to work in Ebolowa. I had been obliged to send for provisions for my men from the farms, so I paid money for our board and lodging to this solitary representative of the inhabitants.

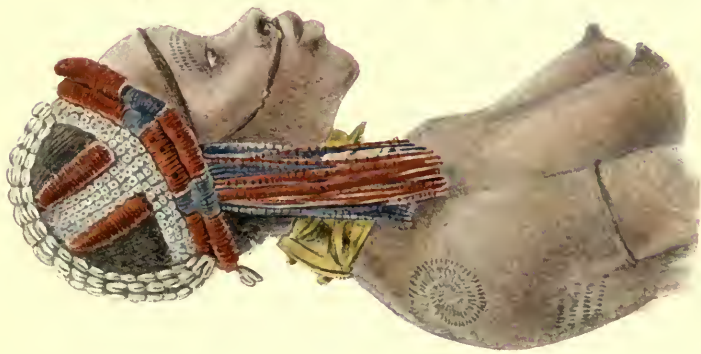
The native hatred of the railway works is due to

the fact that the workmen are obliged to leave their homes for a long time, and also to the high mortality which always occurs among negroes working on the railway. On the morning of my departure from Ebolowa I saw a hundred native workmen starting for the railway works. The farewell scenes were heartrending; for a long time those left behind stood watching the disappearing gang of workmen, and many of them were as overcome with grief as if their departing friends were never to return.

After leaving the village of Belun, I came to a thinly populated district, with ill-kept paths, in which the jungle had gained the upper hand. Here I found a marvellous wealth of lianas of every possible description, amongst them the largest rotangs that I had ever seen; they formed entire thickets, and their cables were as thick as a man's arm. (Illus. 184.)

The scenery was magnificent in the mountainous M'bokum country, which we reached soon after crossing a tributary of the N'tem, the M'wila, which is only thirty feet wide, but fully ten feet deep. In this district we again saw the jungle in all its luxuriant beauty. But animal life seemed to be extinct, there was not even the chirping of a grasshopper to be heard, and from this point onwards I made very few additions to my zoological collection.

There was, however, plenty of material for my ethnological studies. I pitched my tent in the jungle, and during the two days that I spent there, I was visited by Pangwe women from the neighbouring villages, who, when they had overcome their timidity, offered to sell me their beautifully worked necklets and anklets. The most interesting curiosities, namely, their elaborately dressed hair, I could not of course



Pangwe woman with
helmet coiffure and nose
reins



Ram coiffure of a Bule woman



After crayon-drawings by Dr. Schultze



Pangwe woman with
helmet coiffure



obtain. These women seemed to have worked into these erections of hair the whole of their wealth with the exception of their heavy brass necklets and anklets.

The coiffures of these Pangwe women are real works of art, and could scarcely be surpassed in extravagance. (Illus. 186-189, and coloured plate.) Most of them are shaped like the steel helmets of the Plantagenet period, and are adorned with mosaic patterns of beads, buttons, nails, and cowrie shells. From each temple a band of hair is brought forward and drawn through the pierced cartilages of the nose. Sometimes these bands are so elaborately adorned with beads that at a distance they resemble a military chin-strap worn in the English fashion. Each village has its own style of hairdressing; for instance in one case I saw long plaits, six feet in length, adorned with cowrie-shells and brass rings, and habitually worn twisted round the neck.

Obviously the construction of these works of art must take a very long time. Women are not considered sufficiently skilful, and all the hairdressing is entrusted to a few men, who receive a fixed sum for each coiffure. (Illus. 190.)

When I left Ebolowa I was told that I could certainly count on fine and dry weather for my journey. But the weather conditions of the South Cameroons seemed anxious to prove how incorrectly they had been judged. July, which is supposed to be the driest month in the whole year, proved the wettest that I have ever experienced. On the 2nd of July a continuous downpour set in, and two days later in the village of Okoa, the rain was still falling in torrents. When I started the next day, the sky was overcast, and in the evening I had scarcely pitched my tent at Aseng when another

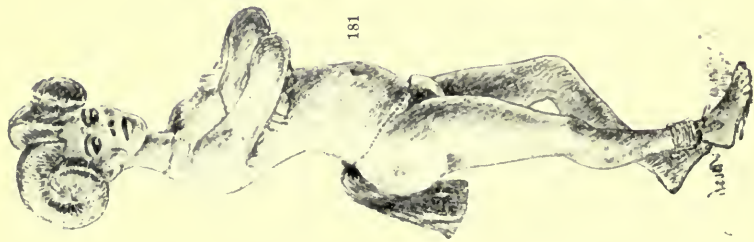
storm overtook us, the rain falling in sheets, so that I had some difficulty in saving my tent from being washed away. When the rain had ceased it began to thunder, and the lightning continued at intervals throughout the night. The atmosphere was so moist that my water-colours became liquid, and even at the height of the rainy season I had never had such difficulty in keeping my belongings dry. To add to my misfortunes, my right wrist was swollen and painful owing to an attack of rheumatism.

But we were not yet at the end of our difficulties, and the next day was the most exhausting that I ever remember. The sky was overcast when we set off soon after nine o'clock, and the N'kolengondum Mountain, at the foot of which lies Aseng, was wrapped in thick clouds. According to the map the next stage of our journey seemed comparatively short and easy, but if I had realised the difficulties that lay before us, I should have taken a supply of food from Aseng, and encamped for the night in the jungle. Soon after passing the village of Akom, we entered the forest; the ground was very boggy, and everything seemed gloomy and depressing in the absence of sunshine. After wading through the morass for about two hours, we reached the foot of the N'kololoma Mountains; another hour's climbing brought us to the pass, about five hundred feet below the highest summit. The descent on the other side was far worse than the ascent, and it is incomprehensible to me how this road with a slope of thirty to forty degrees can have ranked for so long as a main road.

On the further side of the mountain we came to the Loma River, and great was our disappointment to find nothing but abandoned villages in place of those

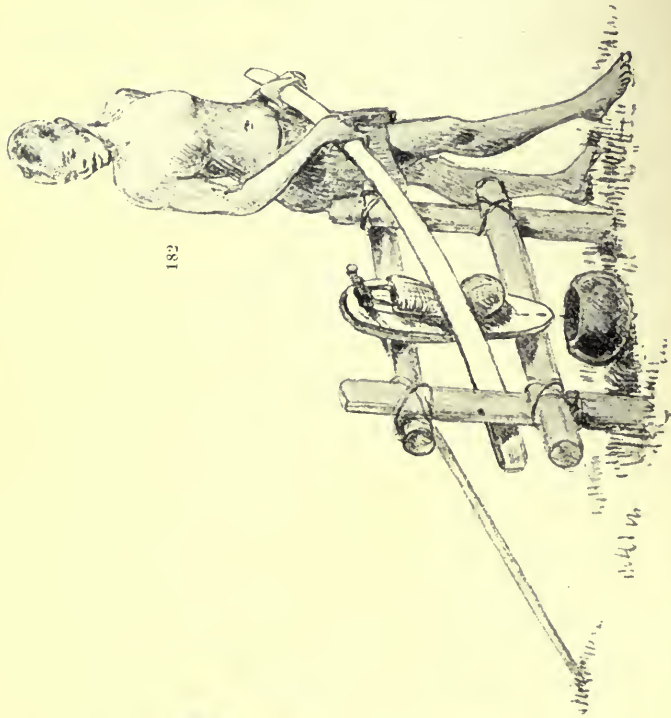


180. Station of Ebolova from Bülow Hill.



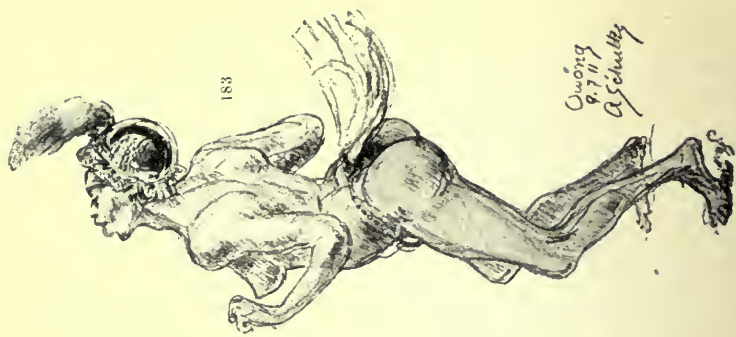
181

181. Bule woman with Ram coiffure and Ebui.



182

182. Pangwe Oilpress.



183

*Owong
9.7.11
A. Schullz*

183. Pangwe dancer.

marked on the map. The forsaken village sites had a melancholy aspect, and they seemed to be the favourite playground of elephants, tracks of which we had already seen in the forest. Everything was trampled and torn down, and in the whole banana plantation there was not a branch intact, the elephants having run riot to their hearts' content. Probably all this devastation was the work of but a few animals, though to the uninitiated it would appear to be due to a large herd.

A storm overtook us just as we reached these deserted villages, and in five minutes we were soaked to the skin. We knew that it would take us at least an hour to reach our camping place, and the worst obstacle still lay before us in the shape of the Loma River, now a raging torrent, far overflowing its banks. The only bridge was one of the usual slippery tree-trunks, which on this occasion was a foot under water. It was with the greatest difficulty that I managed to keep my balance and avoid falling into the river. The negroes fared better; their bare feet seemed to cling like suckers, and they reached the further bank with comparative ease. Then followed an hour's march in pouring rain, which ceased only at nightfall, just as my tent was being pitched in the village of Endendem.

I sat up for some time endeavouring to dry my things by means of a few candles, and thus prevent them from being utterly spoiled. I was obliged also to take care of my health, since my rheumatism was once more causing me great pain. Under these circumstances Undene and Musa did not receive much encouragement from me when they suggested that we should stalk elephants—"plenty beef" was the expression they used—the next morning at dawn. The sun was shining the following day, so we en-

deavoured to dry our belongings in the village street, but in spite of the stifling heat the air was so saturated with moisture that all our efforts were in vain.

In other respects, too, our stay in this village was not particularly pleasant. The chieftains of the surrounding villages, from whom I sought to obtain supplies for my men, and who seemed to have a very good opinion of themselves, displayed but little alacrity to do my bidding. They made excuses for the scantiness of their provisions, saying that they cultivated only the minimum of fields on account of the devastations of the elephants. I was inclined to believe them, having myself seen evidences of the destructiveness of these animals, whenever the negroes, through native indolence, neglected the simplest precautionary measures, such as beating drums by night or setting a watch.

As I approached the "heights of N'kolumbinde" of which I had heard so much, I was full of curiosity as to the results of my investigation. I felt increasingly sceptical with regard to the altitude ascribed to them on the map, for the natives did not apparently look upon them as the highest mountain range of the district. In answer to the inquiries that I made in almost every village, I was invariably informed that Mount N'kololoma, which I had ascertained two days ago to be 3000 feet in height, was the loftiest mountain in the neighbourhood. It appeared, moreover, that the country sloped imperceptibly downwards as I advanced, judging by the measurements that I had taken at regular intervals. It was possible that the approaching marked differentiation between mountain and valley had been responsible for the erroneous estimates, no

European having so far made the ascent of any one of these mountains.

In another direction, however, my observations led me to anticipate a geographical surprise. Ever since leaving the village of Okoa on the 3rd of July, I had noticed a remarkable change in the flora, chiefly as regards the peculiar constitution of the forest undergrowth, in which there predominated at intervals a charming little palm *Podococcus Barteri*, often to the exclusion of all other plants. (Illus. 192.)

After leaving Endendem, I entered upon another vast, cultivated region, containing numerous villages. Oil palms were here more numerous; they had evidently been introduced within the last few years, and the oil was expressed from the fruit by means of a simple but very ingenious device. (Illus. 182.) An excellent road led through this district, the most southerly means of approach to the vast rubber country in the interior of Campo. A considerable caravan traffic gave evidence of the importance of this road, and I even met some Europeans.

Under these circumstances, I was all the more surprised at an amusing episode, similar to one that befell me some years ago in the Vere Mountains, south of Yola. I had pitched my tent in the village of Sebito, when a native woman, carrying in her arms a screaming infant, made her appearance, explaining that she was anxious to see a white man; she had never before come within speaking distance of one of these strange beings, having always run away on the approach of a European. On this occasion, however, her curiosity had got the better of her fear. She minutely investigated my person as well as my tent, and when I had rewarded this brave Pangwe woman's thirst for know-

ledge by giving her a bead necklace, there suddenly appeared upon the scene a whole crowd of old women, all of whom declared that they had never before seen a white man. I was inclined to suspect that their interest concerned my chest of wares for exchange, rather than my person. I took this opportunity of increasing my knowledge of Pangwe customs; my ethnological studies had of late been relegated to the background, as my whole time had been occupied with geographical research. I was specially absorbed in the problem of the "N'kolumbinde Mountain," which must of necessity be solved within the next few days.

Soon after leaving Sebito I marched for a whole day through a district which recalled the plateau of the Upper Djah. During the preceding night several thunderstorms had broken over my camp, their presence being obviously due to the proximity of the mountains. In the morning the landscape was entirely hidden by fog. At the same time the heat was so great that I felt as if I were in a Turkish bath. When at last the fog cleared, I realised that the depression immediately behind Sebito was part of a vast alluvial plain, about twelve hundred feet in height, from which the mountains receded, and which was covered with swamps and splendid jungle vegetation. This was the nature of the country until I reached the large village of Bienemayong, and here I had to make up my mind with regard to the last stage of my journey to the coast.

Bienemayong lies in immediate proximity to the mountainous district, in exploring which I hoped to find the solution of the problem on which I was engaged.

I had two roads from which to choose. One led through Pfanemakok, and would probably have afforded me a rapid solution of my geographical problem; I



184. Rattan thicket.



185. Rock mass with globular cactus-like efflorescence.
The boys Musa and Elume.



186. Pangwe women with helmet coiffure.



187. Pangwe woman with helmet coiffure.



188. Pangwe woman with helmet coiffure and nose reins.

learned, however, in Bienemayong that this road was out of the question, as the bridges had in several places been destroyed by the deep and raging rivers.

When I left Bienemayong on the 9th of July, I caught sight of a portion of the picturesque mountains in which during the past few days my whole interest had been centred. Their massive and fantastic shapes presented an imposing appearance, and I judged them to be from 1000 to 1200 feet above the surrounding country, though at the same time I understood how easily their height might be over-estimated.

As I approached these splendid mountains, the monotonous plantations gradually disappeared, and were replaced by the characteristic vegetation of the jungle, with its long, tapering roots (illus. 193), and cauliflowers. (Illus. 195.) Raging mountain torrents raced down to the valley, and the thunder of one of the N'tem waterfalls was clearly audible. Before long my caravan reached the foot of the picturesque rocky mountains, some of which we had already seen in the distance early that morning.

We halted in the M'wei village of Owong, at the foot of the N'kol-Owong, which, with its precipitous rocks and silvery streams rushing down the dark tree-clad slopes, formed a beautiful background to this peaceful village.

I proposed to spend some time in Owong, and to make it my headquarters whilst exploring the neighbouring mountains. I felt sure that their steep slopes and forest-clad peaks would present serious obstacles to the climber, and that I must take advantage of every possible means of assistance. Fortunately the weather seemed more promising. I noticed a strange meteorological phenomenon on the evening of my arrival

in Owong. Soon after sunset a thick cloud suddenly enveloped the summit of the mountain, the rest of the sky being quite clear. After nightfall the cloud dispersed, and the clear moonlight illumined a perfectly cloudless sky.

As I had anticipated, the bright moonlight soon brought all the villagers into the street, and dancing was presently in progress such as I had never before seen among the Pangwes. A circle of singers, men, women, and children, surrounded a single dancing woman who displayed marvellous agility, and whose every muscle seemed to take part in her frenzied movements. (Illus. 183.) The artistic effect of the dancing was enhanced by her surroundings; the fantastic head-dresses of the women glittered in the moonlight, and the melodious singing of the onlookers harmonised with the supple and graceful movements of the performer. I noticed that the musical ear of the Pangwes was more highly developed than that of the Bules and Yaundes, though I had often listened with pleasure to the songs of the latter. There were real melodies among the songs that I heard on this occasion, one of which bore a striking resemblance to the temple chorus in Verdi's "Aida," in which the composer has consciously or unconsciously reproduced a truly African melody.

Early the following morning Undene set out with some of the bearers in order to find the way up one of the neighbouring mountains, and, if necessary, to cut down some of the trees at the summit, so that I might enjoy an uninterrupted view of the surrounding country. I followed a little later, accompanied by Kukuma, the chieftain of Owong, who related to me many interesting hunting stories. This topic of con-

versation was suggested by the numerous tracks of leopards and elephants crossing the path beside the N'tem in every direction, and by the skilfully made pits that bordered the road, in the digging of which all the hunting tribes are experts.

I was not a little surprised to hear once more of the existence of the great beast of prey which had been described to me many weeks ago at the Djah station, and which Undene had stated to be a lion. Here, too, the animal was known by the name of "Bung-Bung," and it was most graphically described to me by the chief. Five months ago, according to his account, this animal had nightly awakened the echoes of the N'kol-Owong Mountain with its mighty roar.

My attention was immediately rivetted by the name "Bung-Bung," otherwise I might not have paid much attention to my companion's description, or at any rate have referred it to some other animal. The chief's account was, however, in spite of a few exaggerations and inaccuracies, unmistakably applicable to a lion and he specially mentioned its relationship—he used the word "brother"—to the leopard. From the latter he distinguished it by its long, black "beard-beard," the brush of its tail, and the absence of spots ("but he no get marks"). My companion, moreover, gave such an excellent imitation of the lion's roar that no possible doubt remained as to the identity of the animal. He added that no native would dare to attack the animal in its lair among the rocks.

I was particularly surprised at the chief's description of a thick mane, since in the Soudanese lion this distinctive mark is poorly developed. If, however, one is inclined to believe in the truth of the tale, why not go a step further and assume the existence of a species

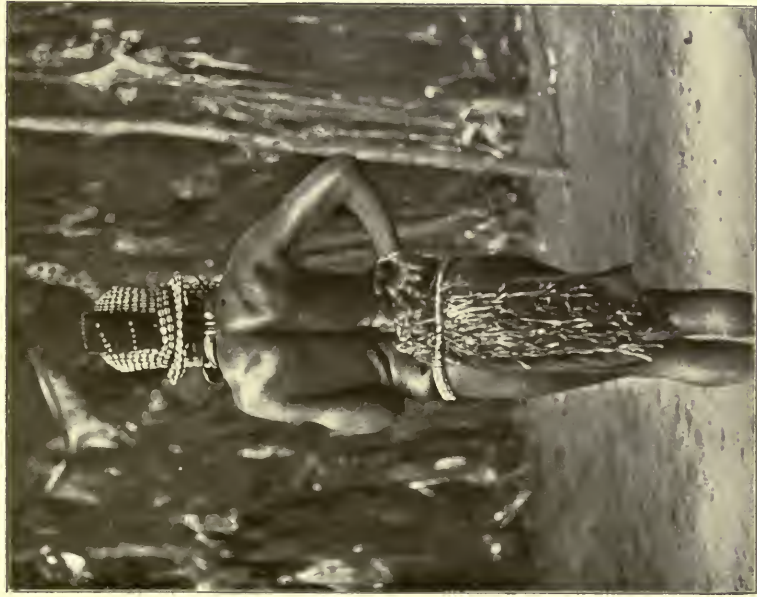
of lion peculiar to the jungle? This would not be the first instance of an animal supposed to belong exclusively to the plains being found also in the jungle. My entomological collections showed that the insects of the jungle so much resemble those of the South African plains that I often felt tempted to believe that in a former age the jungle must have been replaced by dry steppes.

The interesting information for which I am indebted to the chieftain of Owong, although I have no means of verifying it, was by far the most noteworthy item obtained during my excursion to the N'tem.

The following day I expressed a wish to cross the N'tem, but the chief insisted that this was impossible even for himself, since the Esamegundes would immediately kill anyone who attempted to cross the river. I had neither the time nor the inclination to test the truth of this statement, since I had more important work to do in connection with the mountains surrounding Owong. Two European merchants, however, who came from Campo, and were travelling eastwards, visited my camp the same afternoon, and confirmed the chief's statements.

It was late in the evening when Undene and the bearers returned to camp. They had been led astray by the guides supplied by the chief, and after missing the road to the mountain that I had indicated, they had climbed another, the N'kolumwini, the ascent of which had occupied four hours. Undene stated that there was an extensive view from the summit, although in the afternoon it was obscured by clouds. I accordingly decided to make the ascent myself the following morning.

I set off at seven o'clock, and did not return to camp



189. Pangwe woman with helmet coiffure.



190. Pangwe woman at the hairdresser's.



191. Mountain landscape near Endendem.



192. Undergrowth with dwarf palms. (*Podococcus Barteri*.)
My boy Elume.

until it was almost dark. It was a very fatiguing expedition, and in some places I had to proceed on all fours; many of the slopes that we negotiated were at an angle of forty degrees, and were smooth and slippery. The boiling-point apparatus gave a lesser altitude than I had expected, the mountain being only 3000 feet high. I saw another peak towards the north-west, which was 330 feet higher, but none attained the stated altitude of 5000 feet.

Among the jungle flora covering the summit of the N'kolumwini, not only were mountain plants conspicuous by their absence, but there was also a dearth of tree-ferns; on the other hand, I observed a peculiar kind of rotang which gave off a number of tendrils from a single root-stock, and was characterised by almost entire leaves. On the whole the vegetation resembled that of the tropical forests of the plains.

There was little to be seen in the way of mountain fauna. I saw some long tunnelled dwellings near the summit, which the natives attributed to armadilloes. In the swamps near the foot of the mountain, the ground was trampled by elephants, and among the twenty-five feet high *aframomum* thicket which replaced former plantations, Undene drew my attention to the tracks of a gorilla. In one place long *aframomum* branches had been broken off and bent into a kind of bed, on which were scattered other branches. (Illus. 194.) Undene had come across these resting places before, and he asserted that the gorilla lay on his "sofa" in the recumbent position. The huge ape was undoubtedly in the neighbourhood, for the following night I was awakened by a frightful roaring which echoed and re-echoed in the abysses of the mountains.

On the whole I was but ill-satisfied with the results

of my very fatiguing mountain ascent, and when I set out with my caravan the next morning in a westerly direction, I had no notion how to set about solving the problem elsewhere.

I met a soldier from the station of Campo, who was on his way to arrest the chieftain of Ekob on a charge of theft, and who gave me some valuable information. He was a Pangwe, and was familiar with the whole district owing to his having patrolled it. He assured me that the high mountains of which I was in search certainly existed, and that they were near the old Pfanemakok road; he added that the Owong men had probably purposely led me astray for some unknown reason, and that from this village I could easily have reached the highest peak of the district. Although this information was in some respects most annoying, I had at all events learnt that the old main road traversed that part of the country in which was to be found the solution of the problem I was so anxious to solve.

I determined, therefore, to try my luck along the old road, starting from its westerly extremity. I passed through the beautiful jungle, with its rushing streams and thundering waterfalls, and almost imperceptibly reached a low-lying region, which I estimated to be but 300 feet above the sea-level. The slope from the mountainous country to the coast is so gradual that it might easily pass unnoticed, for every stream running parallel with the coast-line forms a kind of step, and the traveller must climb down on the inner bank further than he climbs up on the outer bank. It was surprising to see how promptly my barometer responded to this difference of level.

From the village of Afang I sent my "boy" Stepke

with a few bearers to fetch rice from Campo. I gave him a letter for the commandant, in which I described the difficulties that I had encountered in trying to discover the mysterious "high mountain," and begged for a guide who was acquainted with the locality.

The rain having kept off for five whole days, I began to hope that the dry season had at length set in. But when I left Afang early in the morning of the 14th of July, the ground was once more wet from the rain of the previous night, and a violent downpour overtook us during the last stage of a very exhausting day's march, just before the crossing of the M'wini River.

Judging from the innumerable tracks of wild beasts, this district, in which swamps and jungle alternate with mountains and abandoned plantations, must contain more animals than any other part of the Cameroons. Here and there we saw watch-huts for the natives whose duty it is to keep the elephants and buffaloes from devastating the plantations. The elephants in most cases seemed to prefer the smooth beaten track, and they were careful not to omit any of the bridges, all of which bore deeply impressed in their soft logs the marks of giant feet.

I encamped close to the village of Sogebafam, in order to await the return of the men whom I had despatched to Campo. Here I met a trader named Kirchner who was marching from Campo to the interior, and who had halted for the night in this village. He invited me to dine with him, and this was, so to speak, my first glimpse of the coast which I so longed to reach, but from which I was detained in order to solve important problems.

On the 16th of July Stepke returned, bringing with him the necessary provisions for my new undertak-

ing, and two soldiers from Campo as guides in the mountains. A letter from Herr Freund, who was in command at Campo, contained some valuable information as well as an interesting statement which to a certain extent corroborated the rumours I had heard concerning the existence of lions in the mountains surrounding Owong. My correspondent expressed the belief that the natives of Owong had intentionally misdirected me owing to their dread of the evil spirits which were supposed to haunt the mountains. I gathered further that, in the opinion of the writer, these "evil spirits" were probably identical with the lions that were rumoured to inhabit the Campo Mountains. A more startling confirmation of the almost incredible assertions of the natives regarding the existence of lions can scarcely be conceived. Thus vanished my last doubt, not indeed with respect to the presence of lions in these parts, but as to the existence of another highly interesting problem; I regretted nothing so much as the lack of time which prevented me from endeavouring to solve it. From my experience of these mountains I was well aware that many weeks, if not months, would be necessary in order to bring irrefragable evidence to bear on this question. This fearsome and inaccessible mountain appeared to me like some savage beast of prey brooding in his lair, whose means of defence against prying eyes were many times more effective than those possessed by the belts of jungle bordering the rivers in the plains.

On the morning of the 17th July I set off eastwards at the head of my caravan. The road proved better than I had been led to expect, especially through the jungle, which we traversed at a rapid pace. Further on, through abandoned villages and plantations, it

became much worse, and our progress was barred by a formidable thicket of twenty foot *afmomum* and other ginger-like plants. The *afmomum*, a "weed" inseparable from abandoned habitations, seemed to have exercised its customary power of attracting wild beasts; the paths were trampled by elephants, and every ten or twenty steps we came upon the fresh spoors of buffaloes. *Glossinæ* were present in large numbers; they displayed unwonted persistence, velocity, and cunning, relentlessly attacking the unsuspecting traveller.

From the statements of my guides I concluded that I was now on the point of solving the mystery of the "N'kolumbinde." In answer to my oft repeated and impatient questions, I was told that I should soon catch sight of a mountain which was evidently identical with the one of which I was in search. Its real name was N'kolumbembe, so that the name given on the map must be a misprint.

Soon after crossing the River Bembe or Bimbe I saw at last between the trees a rocky peak with menacing and precipitous sides: my long sought mountain! I endeavoured to make a rough estimate of its height, and Undene agreed with me in concluding that it was lower even than the N'kolumwini near Owong.

The mountain soon disappeared from view behind the trees. When at last we reached its foot, Undene, whose eagerness equalled my own, insisted on setting off at once to reconnoitre, accompanied by a few bearers.

The following morning at daybreak my indefatigable assistant set to work on the mountain slopes, and I could hear the huge trees crashing under the axes of the natives. I had told him to find a way of ascent,

and, if possible, to erect a scaffolding on the summit, whence I could command a view of the surrounding country. A few hours later I followed Undene, who, however, sent me word that he had not nearly finished cutting the path.

After climbing a very little way I gained a rough idea of the dimensions of this rocky peak. At first the path followed the stony bed of the N'gata stream, then it led over an immense rubbish heap strewn with huge boulders, some of them sixty feet in diameter, between which the path wound at times as if through a tunnel. It was an escalade requiring infinite caution, for the ground was in places most treacherous, and consisted of decaying leaves filling up deep clefts. Here and there the road was blocked by precipitous rocks, up which I scrambled with the help of lianas and the roots of trees. Huge trees found foot-hold amongst the boulders, grasping the rocks with their roots as though in the grip of a giant's fist; stout liana ropes hung down the steep slopes, affording an insecure balustrade for the climber, who was obliged to test each apparent support before entrusting his weight to it. There was on all sides a wealth of epiphytic plants, and the rocks were carpeted with balsamines and beautiful begonias.

It was late in the evening when Undene returned with the bearers; he related to me that he had climbed an immense tree by means of a liana ladder, and had obtained a magnificent view enabling him to follow the coast line with his eye for a considerable distance.

Like all the high mountains in this neighbourhood, the N'kolumbembe seemed to be a veritable storm centre. On the afternoon of our first ascent the peak assumed its cloud cap, and in spite of our being in the



193. Gigantic root scaffold of a strangling fig in the forest.



194. Gorilla lair. In the background Stepke and Undene.



195. *Cola chlamydantha*.

dry season, sprinkled us towards evening with a little rain. Every now and then the tree-tops rustled, and a gust of wind drove a cloud down into the valley, wrapping us in a driving mist.

It took me the whole morning to reach the summit, and, as the reward of my labours, the boiling point apparatus indicated an altitude of but 2500 feet. I reached the summit about noon, after an exhausting and dangerous climb, or rather scramble, and was immediately enveloped in a cloud cap as thick as a London fog, which presently turned to rain. My hopes of a view were, of course, doomed to disappointment. But even if the weather had been favourable, I should not have seen very much, for Undene had cut down the trees towards the north and west, and in this direction there was but little to be seen. I realised, however, that it would take days of tree-felling to enable me to obtain a comprehensive view, so I was content with what I saw from the top of the big tree during the few available seconds of clear weather. When I got back to camp I felt as if I had been on a mountaineering expedition, in which lianas and roots took the place of alpenstocks and ropes.

It was most unfortunate that our provisions were coming to an end, for Musa, who for the last few days had been out hunting without success, came across a high mountain on the Pfanemakok road, which I felt I must at all hazards investigate. Fortune, however, favoured us, for early on the 21st of July, as I was breaking camp, Musa brought me the good news that he had shot a young buffalo, and thus our difficulties were at an end as regards provisions.

I had already made up my mind that if the results of climbing the N'kolumbembe were not wholly

satisfactory, I would push forward along the Pfane-makok road until I reached the Kom river at a point where, according to the map, there was a great waterfall. The road led alternately through abandoned village sites and luxuriant belts of jungle, where an incredible number of elephant tracks were visible. Presently the thunder of the waterfall became audible, and I sent Undene on ahead to find a suitable camping ground. Fortunately the Kom was now at a low level, otherwise all my plans would have been frustrated.

As soon as my tent was pitched I set off to investigate the waterfall, and soon reached the spot where the river rushed in foaming cascades over the edge of the polished granite rocks, covering the surrounding trees with clouds of spray. (Illus. 197.) There were now three separate falls, but probably in the rainy season they combine to form one mighty, boiling rush of water.

Suddenly I caught sight of a huge cone shaped like a sugar loaf, towering over the tree tops, and apparently close at hand. It was thickly covered with trees, and the summit seemed to be about sixteen hundred feet above my present standpoint. I realised later on that this was the extremity of the ridge that Musa had observed the previous day, and which I, too, had caught sight of for a moment until it was once more hidden by the trees.

The next day Undene set off at daybreak with some of the bearers to discover the best means of negotiating this steep and rugged rock. Meanwhile I busied myself in studying the topography of the country.

I was deeply absorbed in my work with compass, road book, and watch, when my attention was suddenly

aroused by a startling apparition. Musa was walking a few steps behind me when all of a sudden he rushed up to me in great excitement, and pointing to a gap in the balsamine thicket beside me, shouted : " Massa, tiger ! " I had entirely overlooked a leopard which was crouching on a fallen tree barely five paces from the road. Elumu, too, who was close behind me, failed to notice the animal, but Musa, about ten paces in the rear, saw it take to flight, followed by its mate. Having only a shot gun, he was afraid to fire for fear of injuring me.

The same day I received a telegram from the Duke, who was at Lokoja, expressing the hope that Mildbraed and I would accompany him home in the first August steamer. Even if I had at once interrupted my work and hurried to the coast, giving up our projected island tour, I could not possibly have caught the steamer, and I sent a reply from Campo to this effect.

Undene reached camp at dusk, and described to me the difficulties which he had encountered in making the ascent of the highest part of the ridge, adding that he had not yet finished his tree-felling. From his account I gathered that I must be prepared for another day of arduous mountaineering. Fortunately there was nothing to hinder me from spending another day or two encamped beside the Kom Falls, since my men were now well provided with food, brought in by the chieftain of Sogebafam and his wives.

I started at an early hour the following morning, fully equipped for spending the night on the mountain if necessary : I took a supply of food and some blankets for the men, and for my own use one of the outer coverings of my tent, which could easily be converted into a sleeping-sack.

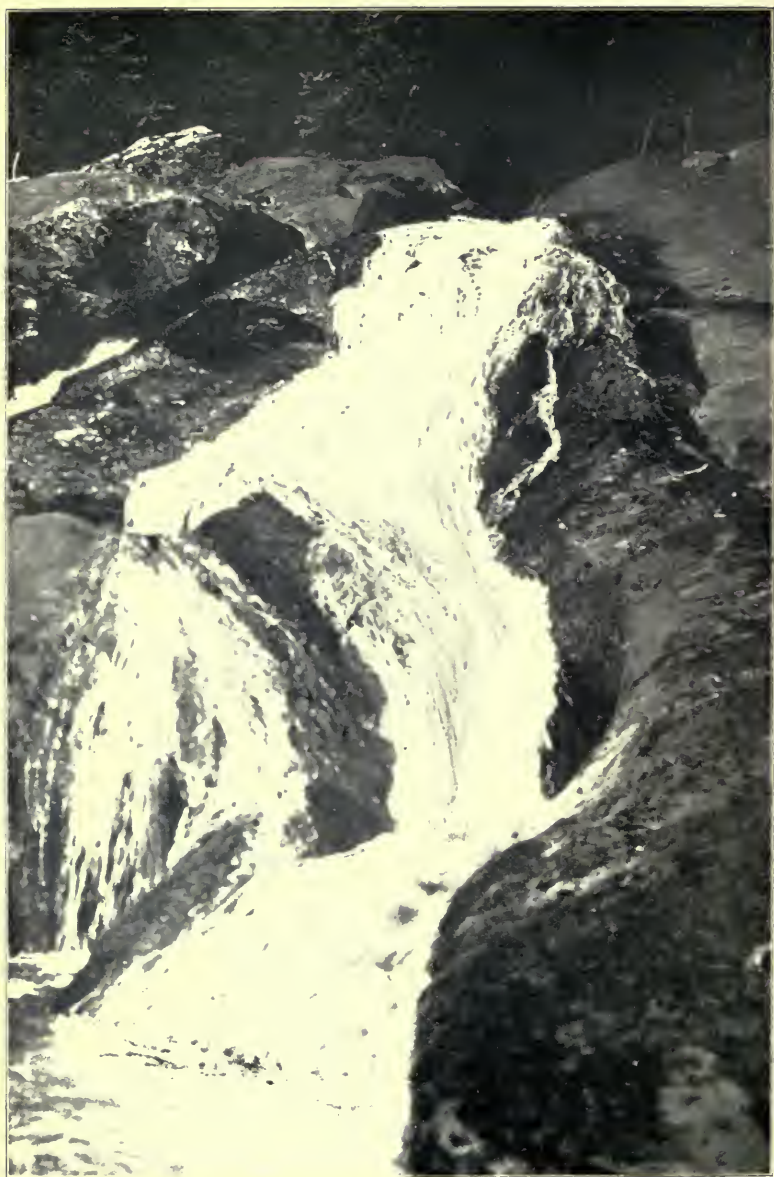
Undene had selected the steepest side of the mountain, but I was now somewhat inured to climbing, and within two hours and a half had reached the summit. The altitude proved to be under 2300 feet, but the view was more extensive than any I had hitherto enjoyed. In order that it might include the mountain ranges toward the south-west and north-east, I had to make up my mind to scramble up a tall tree by means of a liana ladder erected by my bearers. This would have been a hard task for anyone inclined to giddiness, for the tree swayed in the most unpleasant manner, especially when the top was shaken by a gust of wind. My field of vision now included all the surrounding hills of any importance, so that I had at length solved the problem regarding the mountains of this intricate neighbourhood. One thing was certain: not one of the peaks came anywhere near being 6000 feet in height, and I could not even see one that approached 5000 feet. The highest mountain lay in a north-easterly direction, and its altitude was not above 4000 feet.

By three o'clock I was back in camp, well satisfied with the results of my investigations. I set off the following morning in high spirits on the return march to Sogebafam; my men, too, were delighted to think that their hardships were at an end, for, like myself, many of them were reduced to mere skin and bones.

From Sogebafam we were to proceed as far as Afan in the direction of the coast, and at this point I should have to make up my mind whether to take the road to Campo and thence along the coast to Kribi, or to travel across country via N'goen on the Lobe River. The former route was for obvious reasons the more attractive, but the latter was more promising from



196. On the N'tem (Kampo) near Ovoung.



197. Kom falls.

a scientific point of view, this part of the country being but little known.

Excepting for a few occasional showers, the weather was now favourable, and this helped to restore my exhausted bearers to health. By the time we reached Afan, they had so far recovered that they were quite fit for the final stage of the journey.

We were marching through a slightly undulating plain, from 120 to 320 feet above the sea. Every now and then we passed an isolated hill, one of the last out-posts of the mountain range. We travelled almost continuously in the shade of the forest, but owing to the time of year the trees were unfortunately barren and shrivelled. But although the season was unfavourable from the collector's point of view, it was not without its advantages, since in the wet season the large tracts of swamp-land that lay in our path would have been quite impassable.

Before we reached the large village of Angali, we could hear the rushing waters of the Lobe, which, according to some of my men, was part of the Kom River. The road showed many windings, and deviated towards the East, away from the coast. On the 28th of July, at the little village of Akom, my Bule caravan crossed the Lobe in two canoes, and we were now much further from the coast than at Afan, which lay two days' march in our rear.

On the right bank of the Lobe is a vast plain, which during the wet season is said to lie six feet under water. At present the road was easy, although we were tormented by a great number of mosquitoes. The road still led in an easterly direction, and it was not until we had crossed the Niete that it turned once more towards the coast.

Perhaps this slight detour is due to the difficult passage of the Niete, which, even in the dry season, affords a dangerous crossing infested with crocodiles.

I had some very anxious moments during the crossing of this river at its narrowest point. It was here constricted by rocks to about thirty feet, and the bridge consisted of a tree-trunk, with an awkward bend in the middle. Steps had been cut in the slippery surface of the wood, but just as I reached the middle I found that my boots were not gripping properly, and at this critical point I was obliged to assume a sitting posture and slide along the remainder of the bridge, with the foaming torrent boiling beneath me. With an effort of will I conquered the momentary giddiness that assailed me, and scrambled across.

Having crossed in safety myself, I felt some anxiety for my baggage, for in spite of their monkey-like agility, some of the men faltered at the prospect of this dizzy crossing, knowing that everything that fell into this abyss would be irretrievably lost. A few of them, however, walked over the slippery bridge with the utmost unconcern.

After crossing the Niete, we were once more in a region which had once been cultivated, as evidenced by the presence of a formidable *afmomum* thicket. The largest forest regions now lay behind us. In one respect this was unfortunate, for one of my principal reasons in selecting this route to the coast was in order to make the acquaintance of the Bagielli dwarfs, whose language I was anxious to compare with that of the other dwarfs that I had met.

I had made numerous inquiries, and Kukuma of Angali had assured me that there were no Bagiellis left in his district, as they had all migrated nearer



Lobe Waterfall, on the Batanga coast
Water-colour by E. M. Heims



the coast. Later on I learned accidentally that the Angali chieftain was the only man who could have met my wishes in the matter of the dwarfs, as hordes of Pygmies were at that very time hunting elephants for him in the neighbourhood of his village.

I happened to meet another chief on the road to Kribi, who informed me that a friend of his, living in the next large Bule village, had just bought a Bagielli wife, these women being much sought after as wives, as their children are very strong and healthy.

After making many inquiries I succeeded in finding this woman in the village of Anjok, and induced her to pay me a visit in my tent. She certainly displayed none of the shyness of her race. A few questions satisfied me that she knew not a word of the pygmy language, and the same thing applied to other representatives of this tribe whom I met a few days later in Kribi. The villagers, too, assured me that the Bagiellis of the coast spoke only the language of the surrounding Bantu tribes.

From now onwards we proceeded rapidly to the coast. On the 30th of July we encamped in N'kolumbunde, at the foot of the forest-clad Nanga, the famous "Elephant Mountain" well known to all ships' captains. It did not, however, welcome us in a friendly manner, for on our arrival it was wrapped in clouds which poured down torrents of rain.

I was anxious to make the ascent of the Nanga, in order to obtain a final view of the mountainous region in the rear. I had little time to spare, so on the afternoon of my arrival I made inquiries as to the possibility of the ascent. It has several times been climbed by Europeans, so that the chief of the village readily supplied the necessary information,

and for the sum of two marks agreed to be my guide.

I set off early the following morning, and as I began to climb I heard the hoot of a steamer, which sounded as clearly through the fog as if I had been close to the sea. My Togo "boys" who had grown up in the vicinity of the sea, were greatly excited, and in my heart, too, it awakened memories of the coast that lay a whole year behind me.

Owing to the previous heavy rain, the ascent through the wet underwood and up the steep micaceous slopes was most unpleasant, and yet it was mere child's play to my previous mountaineering expeditions.

The same day we set off again, and after crossing the Lobe for the second time, found ourselves in the monotonous agricultural district belonging to the Mabeas, a tribe that has migrated from the East, and whose elongated houses show their connection with the Kunabembes and other Congo races.

In the village of Sabane, our last halting-place before reaching Kribi, the roar of the sea was distinctly audible, and I must confess that I slept little, so eagerly did I anticipate the events of the following day.

When at length we stood on the burning shore of the Batanga coast, some of my men who had never seen the sea, gazed half incredulously at the vast expanse of water, and with mingled pleasure and fear let the waves wash over their bare feet.

At the church of the Catholic mission at Great Batanga I came to the end of my work on the continent. After greeting Father Schwab, I hastened after my men along the sunny road leading to the shore in order to cross the bay in the little Government boats. At the extremity of the bay the Lobe

rushes over the rocks straight into the sea. (Vide coloured illus.)

Within an hour all the loads had been landed on the further shore, and a little later I greeted my colleague in the hospitable house of Dr Schürmann in Kribi.

Mildbraed was in the act of arranging his botanical trophies, and was no less satisfied than I with the results of our journey. In the neighbourhood of Fenda he had found a particularly favourable botanising ground, and west of this village he had observed a well defined floral boundary.

We were very busy for several days. The bearers had to be paid off and discharged, our collections packed, and all the cases containing the treasures amassed during the past six months prepared for transmission to Germany.

The weather was most unfavourable, and the rain poured down day after day in torrents. But our kind host's house was all the more enjoyable, and my colleague and I shall always retain very pleasant memories of the happy evenings spent on his wide verandah.

Kribi marked the close of our labours on the mainland of Africa, and all that remained of our task was the exploration of the Spanish Guinea islands.



CHAPTERS XXV AND XXVI
FERNANDO PO AND ANNOBON

BY

DR J. MILDBRAED

CHAPTER XXV

FERNANDO PO

WHEN we left Hamburg, a visit to the Guinea Islands was not contemplated, and it was only a chance occurrence that determined the South Cameroons party to explore these islands at the close of their travels on the mainland. Herr Krull, agent for the German firm, E. H. Moritz, at Fernando Po, happened to be travelling with us, and the "Eleonore Woermann" touched at Santa Isabella in order that he might land. During our short stay the idea that was already in our minds took root, and when we put in at St Thomas and observed its magnificent vegetation, we made up our minds to pay a longer visit to these islands if we could by any possibility arrange to do so. We never regretted this decision, although our journey was delayed by unfavourable weather and bad roads, so that we were unable to carry out the whole of our plan.

After our prolonged journeys in the Cameroon jungle, which afforded a rich harvest to the scientist, but at the same time presented many difficulties to the traveller, we were so favourably impressed by Fernando Po and Annobon that all our hardships were forgotten and these islands have remained in our minds a glorious memory like Lake Kiwu and the volcanic giants that we saw in East Africa during our first expedition.

Fernando Po bears the same relation to the Cameroons as Zanzibar to German East Africa. But whereas Zanzibar is well-known in German colonial history, the "pearl of the Gulf of Guinea" is to most of us little more than a name. Even to the Cameroonians it has remained more or less a terra incognita, although Victoria is scarcely thirty-six miles from the capital Santa Isabella. The island has relapsed into obscurity, for in the middle of the last century, when it was occupied by the British, it was well known as the mainstay and centre for all the enterprises against the slave trade, as well as for the Niger expeditions.

In the year 1472 (or 1471) the Portuguese Captain Fernao do Poo discovered in the Bight of Biafra an island which, from its tropical luxuriance and beauty, he named Formosa, this name being changed later to that of its discoverer. There now remains no trace of Portuguese rule; its undertakings mostly took the form of slave hunts, and the native Bubis, to whose highly moral character this kind of traffic was most repulsive, withdrew themselves into the woods and mountains, and whenever possible, drove back the "white devils" who landed on their shores. It is not improbable that the Bubis' present-day fear of Europeans has its origin in the dark deeds of those ancient times.

In the year 1777 the island of Fernando Po was bartered to Spain, and a splendid expedition was sent to take possession. But the leader, Count Argelejos, died soon after entering upon his new kingdom, and the settlers were so decimated by fever that their discontent finally culminated in a mutiny. The ringleaders imprisoned Lieutenant Primo de Rivera, and abandoned the land that had treated them so

inhospitably. From that time onwards Spain troubled herself no more about the island. But British sea captains realised the value of its position, its harbours, and its excellent drinking water, and in 1827 the British Government decided to make Fernando Po the headquarters of the expeditions for the suppression of the slave trade. Clarence Town, the present Santa Isabella, was founded, and the negroes taken from the captured slavers were settled there. The Spaniards apparently protested but weakly; occasionally the English vacated the island, leaving only a consul, and in 1839 they endeavoured to purchase it. But the national pride of the Spanish Cortes was wounded by the offer of no more than £60,000 sterling. British influence, however, rapidly gained ground, and the English consul, Beecroft, was at the same time Spanish Governor! He was succeeded by the Dutchman Lynslager. The expeditions sent out from Spain at intervals were not very effective, and it was not until 1858 that a Spaniard was appointed Governor.

Since then the island has remained nominally under Spanish rule. British influence was, however, so persistent that in 1886 Oskar Baumann described Fernando Po as being "entirely English excepting for the government." But of recent years things have changed, especially since the Spanish mission "del immaculado corazon de Maria" has planted numerous settlements in every part of the island.

There have been many enterprises on the part of the Government, with but poor results; costly undertakings have been started, which have either failed altogether, or have gradually collapsed owing to a lack of perseverance and interest. What was started

with great zeal by one governor was allowed by his successor to fall into oblivion. Bishop Coll, in his book on Fernando Po, bewails this lack of stability.

Much still remains to be done. Roads, in the sense of passable thoroughfares, exist only on paper, and the two government steamers "Annobon" and "Corisco" are in such a state that it is surprising that they can still maintain the service. Nor has the Government any idea of influencing the native Bubis, and thus solving the problem of procuring labourers. The lack of workmen is the greatest evil in Fernando Po, and unless it can be remedied, it will be impossible to exploit the natural wealth of the colony. It is, however, exceedingly doubtful whether any improvement will ever be achieved in this respect under Spanish dominion.

When British influence was paramount several scientific expeditions explored the island. A naval lieutenant named Badgley was the first to survey the coast, and his results have laid the foundations for all subsequent maps. The report of the great Niger expedition of the year 1841, written by Captain William Allen and Dr Thompson, contains a detailed account of the Bubis, based chiefly on the reliable narratives of Beecroft. Frazer, the zoologist accompanying the expedition, collected some valuable specimens. The botanist, a German named Vogel, was ill when he arrived and soon succumbed to fever. Beside him lies Captain Bird Allen, and Santa Isabella is also the burying place of Richard Lander, whose intrepid voyage into the unknown in a small boat down the Lower Niger disclosed the secret of this river, thus solving one of the most obscure problems of African geography. Fernando Po may thus



198. View of the harbour of Santa Isabel at Punta Fernanda.



199. Tree overgrown with parasites in the mountain forest above Basilé.



200. Portion of a branch with parasites.
Detail of the above illustration.

be styled the cemetery of the Niger expeditions. And yet it is not the entrance to Clarence Cove (the bay of Santa Isabella) that has been named by mariners "the gate of the cemetery," but the mouth of the Nun arm of the Niger; in these swamps they were instilled with the deadly virus, and Port Clarence merely afforded them a final resting place. This partly explains the island's wholly unjustified reputation for possessing a murderous climate.

The British consul Beecroft was the first European to ascend the Peak in 1843; he was followed in 1860 by the botanist Gustav Mann, a German in the British service, who deserves to be remembered in the history of Fernando Po as an explorer of the highest merit. He was to have joined Baikies' Niger expedition as Barter's successor, but failed to do so, and turned his attention with the greatest zeal to the study of the Guinea Isles and the adjoining mainland. He climbed the Clarence Peak five times, and also made the ascent of the Great Cameroon Mountain, and the highest peaks of St Thomas and Prince's Island.

On the basis of his collections, the famous botanist, Sir Joseph Hooker, was able to publish his "Survey of the plants growing in the neighbourhood of the Cameroon Mountains, and in the islands of the Bight of Benin," and to demonstrate the surprising affinity between these flowers and those of the far-away mountains of Abyssinia, at a time when nothing was as yet known concerning the vegetation of the Kilimandjaro or any of the other high mountains of Central Africa. In the year 1863 the explorer Burton made the ascent of the Peak, after having climbed the Cameroon Mountain in company with Mann. Two years previously the Spanish Commissary, Julian

Pellon, took scientific observations from the summit of the Peak, and he subsequently made a map of the island, which in many respects is more accurate than that of Oskar Baumann. This Austrian explorer, who subsequently made a name for himself by his travels in Usambara, and by his supposed discovery of the source of the Nile, visited Fernando Po in 1886, at the conclusion of his researches with the Austrian expedition in the Congo State. He marched from Santa Isabella along the west coast of the island to San Carlos, climbed the Cordillera, crossed over to Concepcion Bay, and finally, in the face of many difficulties, reached the village of Mokas, the residence of the head chief of the Bubis. His book entitled "Fernando Po and the Bubis" (Vienna, 1888), is most interesting, and contains much valuable ethnographical information.

In 1894 the Portuguese naturalist, Newton, paid a flying visit to the island, during which he climbed the Peak.

Of late years the Spanish missionaries have added considerably to our knowledge of the geography of the island; for example, they discovered the crater lakes, Lago de Moka and Lago Loreto in the South, and Lago Claret in the South-West on a terrace of the Peak, as well as some springs containing carbonic acid gas; they have also done excellent work regarding the ethnography of the Bubis and their language. The "Segunda Memoria de las Misiones de Fernando Poo" written by Bishop Armengol Coll (Madrid, 1899) contains a great deal of valuable information.

One fact needs to be emphasised: even though the island has been repeatedly visited by scientific

travellers, none of them remained more than a short time, and it has never yet been thoroughly explored. Not even the most important topographical and geological data are forthcoming, and the exploration of Fernando Po is an interesting but still unsolved problem, as is also that of the other Guinea Islands. For this purpose a special expedition is required, and it would furnish far more important results, at a far less expenditure of time and money than more extensive travels on the mainland.

On the 7th of August we proceeded in the Cameroon Government steamer "Duchess Elizabeth" from Kribi to Duala. Here we transhipped to the Woermann steamer "König," hoping to join at Victoria the little Spanish steamer that fetches the mails on the 9th of every month. But as the departure of the "König" seemed likely to be delayed we applied to the officials at Buea, who willingly placed the "Duchess Elizabeth" at our disposal for the crossing to Fernando Po.

In the afternoon of the 10th of August we steamed into the Bay of Santa Isabella just as a smart looking Spanish vessel left the harbour. We learned later that this was the "Corisco" conveying the Governor to Spanish Guinea, over which he also has jurisdiction.

Santa Isabella, the oldest of the British settlements, and the capital of Fernando Po, enjoys a position as advantageous as it is beautiful. Anyone accustomed to the inaccessible ports along the coast of the West African mainland, will be agreeably surprised on entering the harbour of Santa Isabella. The semi-circle of smooth water is enclosed by rocks a hundred feet in height, whose precipitous surface is clothed with luxuriant vegetation. In the background rises

the steep slope of the plateau on which the town stands ; on the left, towards the East, the narrow, over-hanging prominence of Punta Fernanda juts out into the sea (illus. 198), with a little lighthouse on its summit, whilst on the right is another similar headland, forming part of two small islands. The whole prospect almost gives the stranger the idea of a crater filled with water, and its inner margin is scarcely higher than the flat country which gradually slopes up towards the interior, where it culminates in the Peak.

From the landing-stage the road leads straight up the steep slope, at the top of which is a "plaza" laid out in gardens filled with flowers. It is surrounded on three sides by houses, whilst towards the sea the edge of the slope is safeguarded by a low stone balustrade. The roads, some of which are provided with a footpath, radiate from the "plaza." Few of the houses possess front gardens, and they are crowded together into so small a space that they resemble the continuous frontage of a town street.

Most of the buildings are simple, comprising as a rule only two stories, and are built either entirely of wood, or with a stone foundation and a superstructure of wood. They nearly all boast of a verandah.

The uniformity of the houses, grouped as they are round a common centre, the plaza, however modest they may seem on a closer investigation, makes Santa Isabella appear much more "townlike" than many another larger and more important place on the West Coast, for example the scattered and straggling Duala.

We were hospitably entertained in the German house of Moritz, where we renewed our acquaintance with Herr Krull, and with the other gentlemen whom

we had met during our short visit on the way out. One of the owners, too, Herr Edgar Moritz of Hamburg, happened to be staying there, and welcomed us with the utmost cordiality. We owe him our hearty thanks, for without his co-operation and that of his friends we should have had to depart without having effected our object. For there were much greater difficulties to be faced than we had anticipated. The time of year was most unfavourable owing to the heavy rain, and bearers could not be obtained at any price on account of the shortage of labourers, which made itself doubly felt at this the harvesting time on the cocoa farms. But for Herr Moritz placing some of his men temporarily at our disposal, we should never have got beyond the coast.

We visited first the Deputy-Governor and military commandant, Julio Pantoga. He gave us a letter of recommendation to the Government officials, and allowed us to bring in the greater part of our weapons and ammunition which were essential to us for collecting purposes. The duties on these things is exceedingly heavy. In one matter, however, he declared himself unable to meet our wishes, assuring us that the Governor alone had the power to do so. As the rainy season lasts until the end of November, we were anxious to visit the other Guinea Islands first. The only service connecting them is that of a little Spanish steamer, which conveys the mails twice a month to Prince's Isle. Every alternate month the steamer touches at Annobon on the way, but there is no regular service to St Thomas. Our request was that the Governor should let the steamer that started for Prince's Isle on the 18th of September proceed to Annobon, so that it might pick us up there and

convey us to St Thomas. Thence we could easily have travelled to Prince's Isle in a Portuguese vessel. We assured Don Julio Pantoga that we were quite prepared to defray any extra expense entailed by this change of route, but he refused to incur the responsibility of making any alteration in the steamer's timetable. We came to the conclusion that the Governor, Angel Barrera, must be a very stern gentleman, and in any case his absence seriously disturbed our plans.

Our next visit was paid to the spiritual head of the Spanish possessions in the Gulf of Guinea: the grey-haired Bishop P. Armengol Coll. He received us most kindly, and gave us introductions to the heads of the various mission stations in Fernando Po and Annobon.

We arrived on the 10th of August, and the first steamer for Annobon left on the 2nd of September. I determined to occupy the intervening time in collecting botanical specimens. In the immediate neighbourhood of Santa Isabella the original vegetation has everywhere given way to cocoa plantations, so I decided to explore the virgin forest above the mission station of Basilé, about four miles inland, and fifteen hundred feet above the foot of the Peak. Thither, on the 14th of August, I removed my camp, with the help of some of Herr Moritz' workmen. The road was for some distance flat, and led through cocoa plantations, being shaded by beautiful mango trees. Some railway lines attracted my attention, but they were overgrown with grass and evidently no longer used. Here and there, too, were broken pieces of telephone wire.

Some of the cocoa plantations were apparently well kept, but some were overgrown with weeds, and



201. Mountain forest with tree ferns, above the shelter-hut on the peak of Santa Isabel.



202. Ravine in the mountain forest on the peak of Santa Isabel.

much of the fruit showed signs of brown rot. This disease seemed to me to be induced by too much shade, for in a moist climate like that of Fernando Po the cocoa plant thrives best in the open, and on a slight incline where a gentle breeze provides ventilation. Violent winds from the sea are of course undesirable, and must be excluded by means of a forest screen.

The road rose gradually, until within a short distance of Basilé it became fairly steep. Here the cocoa tree obviously ceases to flourish. At any altitude above 1300 feet it will not grow, the fresh mountain air being too cold for this product of the warm jungle. Here, on the other hand, the elephant grass (*Pennisetum cf. Benthami*) finds conditions favourable to its growth, and shoots up luxuriantly wherever the primeval forest has been disturbed. Since the natives usually build their villages at an altitude of from one to two thousand feet, it follows that in many places a belt of this giant grass encircles the mountains, and this is correctly described by Oskar Baumann as a special "grass zone." But it must not be forgotten that these zones are originally due to man's encroachment, and they are quite different in character to the indigenous prairies, the grassy slopes near the summit of the Peak, or the "grasslands" of Moka.

Owing to its healthy, bracing climate, Basilé was selected in 1892 as the site for a settlement of Spanish colonists. A mission station was founded and some Spanish Marine Infantry barracks were erected. Later on a Governor added a summer residence for himself. I could not help drawing a comparison between this place and the mountain residence of the Cameroon Governor at Buea, in which the German

settlement did not appear to advantage. Even during the rainy season Basilé is almost always below the level of the clouds, and the view over Santa Isabella and the sea remains clear, whereas Buea, which is 3000 feet high, often remains wrapped in dripping clouds for many months at a time. It is scarcely necessary to add that such an atmosphere is most depressing to the spirits of the residents.

I pitched my tent in the neighbourhood of the barracks. This is a large square building resting on piles, and surrounded by a verandah. At present the only inhabitant is a married Spanish non-commissioned officer, who supervises a few black soldiers and a great many children. The fate of this building recalled that of the unfortunate Musola "sanatorium."

Before we had finished pitching the tents, a steamer, the "Cameroon" of the Woermann line, was seen entering the bay of Santa Isabella. The bearers consequently hurried off, as Herr Moritz would require them for unloading the vessel, and I was left alone with my "boys." I collected several botanical specimens in the forest above Basilé, although I was considerably hampered in my work by the incessant rain. I came to the conclusion that the flora here was very similar to that of the Cameroons, and showed few distinctive features.

We had planned to make the ascent of the Peak, even if we had to postpone it until our return from Annobon, so I made up my mind to reconnoitre the path, and to climb as far at all events as the corrugated iron hut erected some years ago as a shooting box on the higher wooded slopes of the mountain. It was used, too, by travellers as a shelter on their way

to the summit, and was built, I believe, by Don Victoriano Calatayud and the Governor de Vera.

One of the brothers belonging to the Basilé mission, with whom I conversed laboriously in nigger English, and one or two Bubi pupils, accompanied me as guides. The path led upwards through some fields belonging to the mission, and over a stream across which a fairly solid bridge had been erected. The strong walled-up buttresses were still intact, but the planking was almost worn away, and the girders were partly eaten away with rust.

We also passed a wall enclosing a square plot of elephant grass, longer and thicker than the most luxuriant reeds. At a subsequent visit, I noticed that the grass had been cut, and lo and behold, the place was a cemetery! After crossing the bridge, we climbed to a cocoa farm, which was situated too high, and was consequently almost barren of fruit. The path was so slippery that we had to catch hold of the branches of the cocoa trees. After this we came to a virgin forest, through which a narrow, overgrown path sloped gently upwards.

With the cocoa plantations we had left behind us the moist, warm, tropical jungle region. The *Daniellia oblonga* grows scarcely as high as Basilé; this is a favourite tree for shading the plantations, its smooth, grey, pillar-like stems rising to a height of about a hundred feet and then spreading out into a mass of foliage. During the rainy season it is leafless, and at the beginning of the dry season, before the appearance of the new foliage, it is covered with a profusion of pale mauve blossoms. The *Allanblackia floribunda* grows above Basilé, forming about three-quarters of the whole forest. This is an unusual number for

a tropical jungle, and is probably due to some local peculiarity of the soil. The underwood is not so dense as to seriously impede the progress of the traveller, who can leave the path without being obliged to use his axe.

At an altitude of about 2500 feet a gradual change is noticeable in the character of the vegetation. *Allanblackia* still predominates, but here and there other trees are to be seen, which really belong to a higher region: e.g. *Polyscias fulva* (Hiern.) Harms, and also mosses and ferns, which begin to clothe the branches, and betray the influence of fog, which is an important climatic factor. A very moist atmosphere combined with a moderate temperature form the most favourable conditions for the growth of these delicate cryptogamic epiphytes. Numerous flowering plants, especially begonias and acanthacias, mingle with the ferns, so that many of the branches form veritable gardens in miniature. (Illus. 199, 200.)

We crossed a clear rivulet, and on the tree trunks thrown across it grew tree ferns with their slim black stalks and bright green fronds, truly the most charming sight in the whole jungle. In one place we traversed a narrow ridge, with deep ravines on each side.

The forest gradually changed, and the beautiful trees gave place to gnarled varieties with wide tops; in the undergrowth the bushes became fewer, and were mingled with flowering plants with soft herbaceous stems. We had reached the home of the acanthaciæ, of which one specially beautiful variety with crimson blossoms might at a little distance be mistaken for a rhododendron.

We climbed slowly upwards in a dripping fog,



203. Pasture region of the peak with a secondary crater to the north of the main summit.



204. View of the "Cordillera" from the north across the Bay of San Carlos.



205. In the grass-land of Moka.



206. Ravine in the grass-land of Moka, with tree ferns and *Mimulopsis*.

through a gloomy forest, in which the trees were thickly covered with moss. And yet it was here that the animal world was specially plentiful. We roused troops of various kinds of meer-cats, and some little silver-grey dwarf antelopes made off on hearing our approach.

This explained why the shooting box had been built so high up, in a most dreary situation at all events in the rainy season. Shortly before reaching it, we entered upon a new zone of plant life.

Up till now the tree tops had formed an almost continuous screen, but now there were occasional gaps, and in the clearances a herbaceous plant grew with indescribable luxuriance in the black, spongy soil. In places it was replaced by a little forest of tree ferns. (Illus. 201.) My heart sank at the prospect, and I had less hope of reaching the summit of the Peak. I was familiar with this kind of wilderness on the Cameroon Mountain, the Central African Mountains, the volcanoes near Lake Kiwu, and the Ruwenzori. If the shoots grew vertically, it would not be so difficult to make a way through them, for the longest and thickest elephant grass or the worst undergrowth of the jungle yields eventually to a clearing knife wielded by the negro's powerful wrist. But it is a much more laborious undertaking to bore one's way through a "loofah-sponge," each of whose fibres consists of strong, woody branches of the thickness of one's thumb. No single plant can be distinguished, for the branching stems grow along the ground in every direction, mingling and intertwining till they form a compact mass, which, with the fresh shoots, may attain a height of twelve feet. Even a buffalo or an elephant would have difficulty in making his way through.

The shooting box is situated at the lower border of this belt of trees with its formidable thicket, 4750 feet above the sea level. It is a corrugated iron hut, about twenty feet by twelve, with a door and one window, and contains a rough table and a few bedsteads, that is to say, shelves supported on posts and covered with sacking. It has been used for several years by the Bubi hunters of the mission, and is in a very neglected state. A fire was lighted, but the damp wood created a suffocating smoke, and I did not envy the mission Brother and his pupils, who intended to spend the night there.

I descended to Basilé in pouring rain, having given up all idea of reaching the summit in view of the difficulties arising from the lack of men and the formidable jungle. I had, however, found a mountain forest such as probably exists nowhere else in Africa, or indeed in the world, and I made up my mind to transfer my camp to a spot where I could collect specimens. I chose a site about 2800 feet above the sea, near a little stream with beautiful tree ferns, where, at the edge of a deep ravine, there was a flat shelf on which the tents could be pitched.

On the 17th of August I left Basilé accompanied by five croo-boys, whom Schultze had with great difficulty secured in Santa Isabella, and a number of Bubi boys from the mission. The latter caused me much annoyance, for though most of the loads were light, and the boys were sturdy, they insisted on having only one load between two of them, so that they could carry it in turn. Intervals of rest ought to have been sufficient, but I was thankful to get any bearers at all. In this way I did not get all my possessions transferred until the third day.

After the first night Schultze's five croo-boys ran away. So I was left alone with my old Bule headman Ekomeno, the two Togo "pearls," and the little tent boy from Bamenda, in a country which they described as "bad too much," with which I heartily agreed.

The view from my tent across the deep ravine, on the other side of which the lichen-covered forest giants reared their mighty heads, was certainly most beautiful; so was the rippling torrent bordered with tree ferns, begonias, and balsamines, whilst the little waterfall below my camp, in its frame of exotic foliage would have sent a painter into ecstasies. (Illus. 202.) But my enthusiasm for the beauties of nature was sensibly diminished owing to my being every day drenched to the skin, and enveloped in a wet, cold fog which covered the tent ropes with mould. We suffered enough from the cold and wet on the volcanoes near Lake Kiwu, but never anything like what I went through in Fernando Po. As a matter of fact the thermometer never fell below 54° F., but even this was a great contrast to the temperature of the West Coast.

On Sunday, the 19th of August, Schultze came up from Santa Isabella with the intention of ascending the Peak. Herr Moritz had succeeded in finding some more bearers to come as far as my camp, which was to serve as a depot, as well as five men to accompany him on this expedition. An educated Bubi, speaking excellent Spanish and a little pigeon English, had also consented to act as guide at a high remuneration. Schultze was ready to start the following day, taking with him his large tent and two smaller ones, together with provisions for six days. He climbed as

far as the corrugated iron hut, where he spent the night, and the next day he began his struggle with the thorn thicket. He describes his experiences in his diary in the following words:—

“Cutting our way through this thorn hedge was a herculean task. On the way up it took me eight hours to cover a distance which was accomplished on the return journey in fifty minutes. Meanwhile it was pouring with rain, and in spite of thick boots and a waterproof, I was drenched to the skin within an hour. The worst of all was that I could not see twenty yards ahead of me, and in the level places the work was most exhausting, the thicket being well-nigh impenetrable. My men were soon quite tired out, and I myself found it hard to exhibit any hope of ultimate success.

“To-day (the 22nd of August) was even worse than yesterday. We hewed a way desperately through the same impenetrable jungle, but to-day a great many fallen trees lay in the road, so that we lost much time in avoiding them. To-day's stage, over which I returned in fifteen minutes, necessitated seven hours' hard work by my frozen and dispirited men. Although I gave them rum at intervals, they suffered greatly from the cold, coughing, and showing all the premonitory signs of fever. At times they refused to proceed any further, and I had great difficulty in keeping up their flagging spirits. I myself was soaked to the skin and bitterly cold. There seemed little hope of success, and the pitiless rain shut out all view of our surroundings. I was tired to death when at four o'clock we turned back, having reached an altitude of 5600 feet.”

For two days Schultze continued to hew his way

through the thicket under these trying conditions, but when, after attaining a height of 6600 feet, he found the thicket becoming if possible worse, with no signs of the grassy slopes of the summit, he gave up in despair.

He decided to relinquish the attempt, partly on account of the exhausted state of his men, and partly because Herr Moritz had promised to send bearers on the 27th of August to fetch our baggage, so that we might start for Annobon on the 2nd of September. Schultze returned to my camp on the 25th of August, and on the 27th he went back to Santa Isabella, where I rejoined him a few days later.

He was, however, determined not to give up the struggle with the Peak, and on our return from Annobon on the 31st of October, he renewed the attack whilst I was still in San Carlos. This time the weather was more favourable, and he succeeded after a hard struggle in reaching the grassy slopes above the thorn thicket. But he was fated not to reach the summit. He had still an hour's climb before him when a violent thunderstorm, accompanied by torrents of ice-cold rain, forced him to retrace his steps. Exhaustion combined with a dearth of provisions obliged him to give up the attempt and descend the mountain. He describes his experiences as follows :—

“ This intolerable situation, in the midst of violent electrical discharges, had lasted for about half an hour when on looking round at my men, I realised that they seemed to be almost at their last gasp ; they were rolling on the ground benumbed with the cold, with chattering teeth. I felt sure that they could save themselves only by walking, and I en-

deavoured to rouse them. Persuasion and threats were of no avail; at length I brought them to their senses with violent blows, and induced them to return to camp, leaving the baggage behind."

On the way down Schultze found one of the men quite benumbed, and it was only by kicking and beating him that he succeeded in forcing him to get up. Every time he stumbled he wanted to be left to die in peace, and two others were in a similar condition.

"Was this fatalism, or boundless indolence? Even when face to face with death the negro is apparently incapable of summoning up an atom of courage in order to save his life."

This description recalls that of my friend Kirchstein, who on the Duke's first expedition lost twenty men in a snowstorm on the volcano Karissimbi, near Lake Kiwu.

After this experience Schultze lost all desire to make any further attempt to reach the summit. On the 9th of November he crossed to Victoria in the little Spanish steamer, and returned home in the "Lucie Woermann." His diary ends as follows:—

"I gained little from all the strenuous and discouraging labour of cutting a path. Mildbraed will enjoy the fruits, and I shall earnestly beg him to ascend the Peak now that the weather is improving daily, and not allow it to defeat the expedition."

I found this request as a legacy on my return to Santa Isabella from San Carlos, the day after Schultze's departure. He had also left me detailed instructions as to the road, in fact a "Baedeker" of the Peak. I cannot say that I felt tempted; I, too, had had enough of it, and should have preferred to remain



The summit of the Peak of Fernando Po, seen from the prairie
Water colour by E. M. J. J.

quietly in Herr Moritz' hospitable house until the arrival of the steamer. In the end, however, I yielded to my annoyance at being beaten by the Peak after climbing so many other African mountains, and to my anxiety not to enable the Spaniards to gloat over our ineffectual attempts. I soon packed up a few necessities, and succeeded in inducing Herr Krull to accompany me.

The path being already made, we could plan out our daily stages beforehand. The first day we climbed as far as the corrugated iron hut, and the second to a "bush-hut" constructed by Schultze's men with branches and twigs, at an altitude of 6000 feet. We were tormented in our tents by a swarm of wild bees; they did not sting much, but were intolerably persistent. They covered the ground that had been cleared for our tents; they attacked our boots and our food; they buzzed in our faces, and everything that we touched had a bee reposing on it. Some of them clung together in great balls. We lighted a fire hoping that the smoke would drive them away, but it did not do much good.

On the third day we reached the summit. (Vide col. illus.) The upper forest with its formidable undergrowth of *acanthaciæ* (chiefly *Mimulopsis violacea* Hook. f. and *Oreacanthus Mannii* Hook. f.) appeared to be endless. In spite of Schultze's strenuous labour, the path did not afford pleasant climbing, and many were the curses that escaped us as we made our way up. Exclamations of admiration mingled with our grumbling, for though I had often crawled through *Mimulopsis* thickets before, I had never seen them in bloom. It is only for a short time in the year that millions and millions of large, wide open,

violet-coloured bells convert the bushes into a sea of blossom indescribably beautiful.

The trees were now smaller and stood further apart ; at first they were mostly *Heptapleurum Mannii*, but higher up the pretty *Hypericum lanceolatum*, with its large yellow blossoms, gained the upper hand, until in the highest part of the forest it was the only tree, with the exception of the *Pittosporum Mannii*.

At last we stood on the grassy slopes which form the final five hundred yards of the summit.

We scrambled up on to a ridge, where immortelles with white heads were growing, together with geraniums, clover, violets, and heather. Then we descended a grassy slope until we reached the foot of the actual summit, which we stormed with enthusiasm.

The crater is about 550 feet deep, but the greater part of its northern side has fallen in, so that from a little distance, and still more when seen from the coast, the summit gives the impression of a comb or ridge, rounded by age, and covered with grass and bushes. The vegetation of the grassy slopes is more luxuriant than that of the neighbouring Cameroon Mountain, and shows a profusion of *Ericinella* plants, absent only at the very summit. (Illus. 203.)

We looked for traces of our predecessors, and found a little wooden cross bleached by the weather, which the Spanish Fathers had erected when they climbed the Peak with the Portuguese naturalist Newton on Christmas Day 1894. Their records were enclosed in a tin, which we removed and took to Santa Isabella. In a bottle we found another label showing that the geologist Dr Esch had been here in 1899, accompanied by Victoriano Calatayud.

We, too, placed our names on a slip of paper in a

bottle, and then we began the descent. Unfortunately it was growing late, and it was already dark when we reached Schultze's bush-hut, whence we had still a two hours' walk to our camp. Here the croo-boys' sense of locality failed, as did that of a "boy" whom we had sent on, unfortunately too late, to fetch a lantern. He had taken our cloaks with him, so we sat all night long without food, without warm clothing, and without a fire, for the wood was damp, and our matches were soon exhausted. We shivered and our teeth chattered, for we were too cold to sleep in spite of the fatigues of the previous day. It was my last night in the African "bush," and I shall not easily forget it!

At the first streaks of dawn we returned to camp, where we crept into our tent in order to get a few hours' sleep before descending the remaining 6000 feet.

Herr Krull walked first, and I followed slowly in order to take a few more photographs on the way. Before we reached Basilé we heard a steamer's siren; it was the "Cameroon" of the Woermann line, which was to convey me to Duala.

On the 15th of October we returned in the "Nachtigal" from Annobon to Santa Isabella, and on the 18th we went on board the little steamer "Annobon" which was to convey us to San Carlos. From here we intended to explore the South of Fernando Po as far as the unfavourable weather conditions would permit.

The configuration of the island, which covers an area of about 1200 square miles, is a rectangular parallelogram divisible into two parts, a north and a south.

The north comprises the slopes of the Peak of

Santa Isabella. The southern part, whose long axis is at right angles to that of the other, has two bays: the larger Bahia de San Carlos in the West, and the smaller Bahia de Concepcion in the East. The mountains of the southern half of the island are the Cordilleras in the West, and the Moka range in the East.

As seen from the North, the Cordilleras form a steep mountain range with a jagged ridge like a saw. (Illus. 204.) Oskar Baumann, who is probably the only European who has ever climbed this ridge, gives its altitude as 9500 feet, but as the forest shuts out all the surroundings, he could not make an accurate measurement with his imperfect instruments.

Next to the capital, San Carlos is the most important town in Fernando Po. A Government representative resides there, also a physician in charge of a hospital. A Spanish mission is situated just above the town, and one belonging to the English Baptists higher up in the mountains.

Towards the North the inhabitants of San Carlos enjoy a magnificent view over the sea and the Peak, which from here seems much steeper and more imposing than from Santa Isabella.

The bay of San Carlos forms an excellent harbour, completely sheltered from the prevailing south-westerly winds, and in its almost unlimited capacity surpassing that of Santa Isabella.

One of the chief reasons that induced us to visit San Carlos was a desire to explore the virgin forests of the interior, since in the North they have had to make way for the cocoa plantations. The latter extend from Santa Isabella on both sides of the island along the coast to a little beyond the bay of Concepcion in the East, and to Bokoko in the West. In the South

there are as yet no plantations, since the harbours on this side are not favourable, and, moreover, there is, so far, no need of any further extension.

These vast plantations belong to a man named Wilson, living in Santa Isabella, and to the wealthy and influential Sierra Leone negro, Maxim Jones. Some time ago they were laid out by a Spanish Captain Romera in such a manner that if they had been properly developed, they might have competed with the Portuguese cocoa plantations of St Thomas. Romera is said to have employed six hundred workmen, but he must have mismanaged his affairs, for this fine property passed into other hands, and has steadily degenerated ever since.

At the present time everything is miserably neglected, and Mr Lewis is attempting the impossible task of restoring and keeping up this vast property with but one-tenth of the workmen employed by Romera. Entire cocoa fields have recently been reclaimed from the rapidly growing bush; wild hogs have made their home in the Manila hemp plantation, which has been utterly abandoned; one cocoa plantation in the mountains has so entirely died away that the way to it has been forgotten; a handsome iron and wood house, imported from England in sections, and which was intended as a dwelling for European officials, stands empty and in ruins, and only the plantations nearest to the manager's house are maintained in fair order by the few available workmen.

I went in a boat supplied by Herr Friedrich, my host in San Carlos, to Bokoko, where I was very kindly received by Mr Lewis, an Englishman, who is the manager of the plantations. Here I added to my botanical collection as far as was possible in the very

wet weather. For three days of the week it rained almost uninterruptedly. I am not sure whether I really found a virgin forest, for it is possible that the Bubis may long ago have had a settlement here. Mr Lewis showed me in a cocoa plantation not far from his house, a basaltic column rising obliquely out of the ground, on which the Bubis are said to sacrifice fowls occasionally at night. The few natives that I came across here were unusually muscular, and somewhat scantily dressed individuals, very different from the degenerate specimens to be seen in the streets of Santa Isabella.

When I had been in Bokoko a week, Herr Friedrich sent his boat to fetch me away. I found that Schultze had left San Carlos ; after buying all the native utensils that he could find in the neighbouring Bubi villages, he had returned to Santa Isabella, in order to make another attempt to reach the summit of the Peak.

For my part I was very anxious to see the Moka prairies, of whose beauty I had heard so much from Herr Krull and Herr Lieb. But how was I to get there ? Bearers could not be obtained to accompany me so far at any price. Eventually Herr Friedrich succeeded in securing the services of two men for one day, who undertook to carry the essential part of my luggage to the Mission station Musola, leaving my tent behind.

The road leads along the southern shore of the bay, as far as the Vivour plantation at its eastern extremity. At the time when Baumann visited the island W. A. Vivour, a Sierra Leone negro, was the chief land-owner and one of the most influential merchants in Fernando Po. Since his death this large property has been somewhat neglected, and in the face of the

present dearth of labourers it would be difficult for even the most energetic of owners to keep it up.

Beyond Vivour's farm the road becomes very bad, and leads first of all through the forest, and then again through cocoa plantations, some of which belong to the Bubis and others to the Mission. Here there are also a number of splendid oil palms, the produce of which is now of little account, though before the introduction of cocoa, it was the principal export of the island. It is much to be regretted that the Bubis neither avail themselves of the existing palm groves, nor plant new trees. They need only supply the raw fruit; very little machinery would be needed to express the oil, whereas cocoa requires very careful preparation.

The end of our long and fatiguing ascent was heralded here, as at Basilé, by the appearance of elephant grass.

The history of Musola is most interesting. Before the erection of a sanatorium at Basilé, a commission was intrusted with the task of selecting a suitable spot for the purpose in the neighbourhood of the Bay of San Carlos. The choice fell upon Musola, a village situated about 1600 feet above the sea, on the lower slopes of the Moka Mountains. Two stately buildings were erected at enormous expense, for they were constructed entirely of iron, and all the materials had to be brought from Europe.

If the architect had taken the trouble to make a road to the sanatorium in order to make it more accessible from the shore, the undertaking would not have proved such an utter failure. In order to reach it the patients had to walk seven miles up a rough footpath, and the result, which might have been anticipated, was that when anyone fell ill he did not

care to further endanger his health by betaking himself to the sanatorium.

So the undertaking failed utterly, and in 1896 the buildings were handed over to the missionaries. It was no light task to reach them, for they lay buried in an impenetrable wilderness of bushes and elephant grass. After taking possession of one building, the missionaries laboured four days longer before they discovered the second, although there was but fifty yards between them! This sounds so improbable that one is almost inclined to regard it as a malicious invention, but the account is quite correct, being taken from Bishop Coll's own description. I have myself spent one or two days in one of these houses; it is built on piles, and comprises four large rooms, each of which is sixteen feet square. Surrounding the house is a wide verandah, opening out on one side into a large hall, so spacious that it could easily be converted into two rooms of the same size as the others. Everything is made of iron excepting the doors, windows, and flooring, and the walls are composed of plates of sheet-iron. At present this magnificent building, of which the painting alone is said to have cost four thousand pesetas, is inhabited by a Spanish non-commissioned officer and two black soldiers. The second house, which is still more roomy, serves as a church for the mission, and the Fathers have built themselves an adjoining stone house.

The situation is well adapted for a sanatorium; the air is healthy, and the view, which includes the Bay of San Carlos and the Peak, is unrivalled in its magnificence.

For two successive days the weather favoured me, and I was able to explore the famous Moka prairies. The road, which is quite passible for pedestrians, passes through an abandoned village site, not far from the



Mimulopsis violacea, a characteristic plant of the upper forest in Equatorial Africa

Bubi settlement of Rilako, and then turns towards the South. After crossing a small stream, I climbed up the steep mountain slope. The forest bears little resemblance to the one above Basilé, the trees being smaller and more branching, and the undergrowth chiefly composed of ferns; there are numerous lianas, and the most noticeable epiphyte is a climbing plant of the *Culcasia* family. The whole vegetation was so peculiar that I was at first inclined to regard it as a secondary forest, until I remembered having seen something very similar on the Niragongo volcano near Lake Kiwu. In both cases the soil was probably of recent volcanic origin.

The forest became more and more open as I ascended; the tree-ferns were more and more numerous, and after passing a few shrubs of *Mimulopsis Violacea* in full flower (vide coloured illus.), I was soon in the prairie. I traversed a narrow belt of tall elephant grass, and then, at an elevation of 3600 feet, there came into view the most beautiful landscape that I have ever seen. (Illus. 205, 206.) The ground rose in a gentle undulation and then sank into a wide, flat basin in the middle of which lay Moka. Here and there were picturesque little ravines through which trickled rivulets of clear water, and mounds with small craters at the summit. (Illus. 207.)

The ground is covered with a luxuriant growth of grass, in which are scattered numerous trees which enliven the scenery and form a pleasant change.

As I wandered along the path, and trod the elastic turf in the bright sunshine, the air was so soft and fresh that I felt in the mood for singing, and I could scarcely realise that the dismal forest with its difficult paths, and the coast with its enervating hot-house

atmosphere were so close at hand. So great is the charm of Moka that it influenced even my black companions. My boy from the prairies of the North-West Cameroons was quite excited; he pointed to the trees which also grew round his home, and admitted that they were almost more beautiful than those of his "own country," the highest compliment that he could pay.

The inhabitants of Moka lead a quiet and secluded existence; few people know of its beauties or utilise its advantages. To say that there are three hundred Bubis in the whole prairie region occupying about ninety square miles, is a high estimate. In addition there is a small mission settlement, a Government official, and a factory belonging to the *Compania transatlantica*, which owns herds of cattle, sheep, and pigs that gambol in a semi-wild state on the beautiful pasture lands. And yet the European inhabitants of San Carlos live on tinned meat and ridiculously dear chickens!

The traveller naturally asks himself what can be the origin of this prairie land, differing as it does from the pastures of other African mountains. The Peak and the Cordilleras are covered with trees at a corresponding altitude, and even higher. It cannot therefore be due to climatic conditions, but it may possibly be explained by the fact that the soil is composed largely of ashes of volcanic origin. That the mountain land of Moka is of comparatively recent date is proved by the fact that on its slopes are evidences of active volcanic action in the form of springs impregnated with carbonic acid gas. One of these springs may be seen at Loita, not far from Musola, and another, which I myself investigated, at a place called Mioko, at the foot of a

ravine east of the Moka path. The water issues from several little shallow basins, in which it bubbles vigorously as if it were boiling in a cauldron. It is very refreshing and has a pleasant flavour ; its temperature is 59° F. There is a similar spring at Balachalacha, between Moka and Concepcion, where the missionaries found the skeletons of birds and small mammalia that had come to drink and had been suffocated by the carbonic acid gas. The Loita water is used for drinking purposes by the Musola missionaries ; it has been analysed, and is said to resemble Vichy water.

I would gladly have paid a longer visit to the Moka prairies, but my time was limited, and after descending to San Carlos, I took the first opportunity of returning to Santa Isabella, whence Herr Krull and I made the ascent of the Peak as already described.

Anyone who visits Fernando Po cannot fail to be struck by the wealth and potentialities afforded by the unusually favourable natural conditions of this island. A glance at its literature reveals ever the same thought expressed in all ages and in various languages, by English sea-captains, Spanish missionaries, and German explorers alike : what a profusion of beauty and wealth ! What prosperity must lie in store for this island !

Let us investigate for a moment the natural conditions of Fernando Po, and let us see what are the factors that come into play, and how they have been utilised. Its area is about twelve hundred square miles, that is to say, it is about four-fifths of the size of Samoa and more than twice as large as the famous cocoa island St Thomas. Its volcanic soil is extremely fertile, and the climate is typically tropical, corresponding on the whole to that of the mainland opposite, although the average rainfall of 100 inches is not so excessive

as that, for example, of Debundsha. The dry season, during which, however, some rain falls, includes the months of December, January, and February.

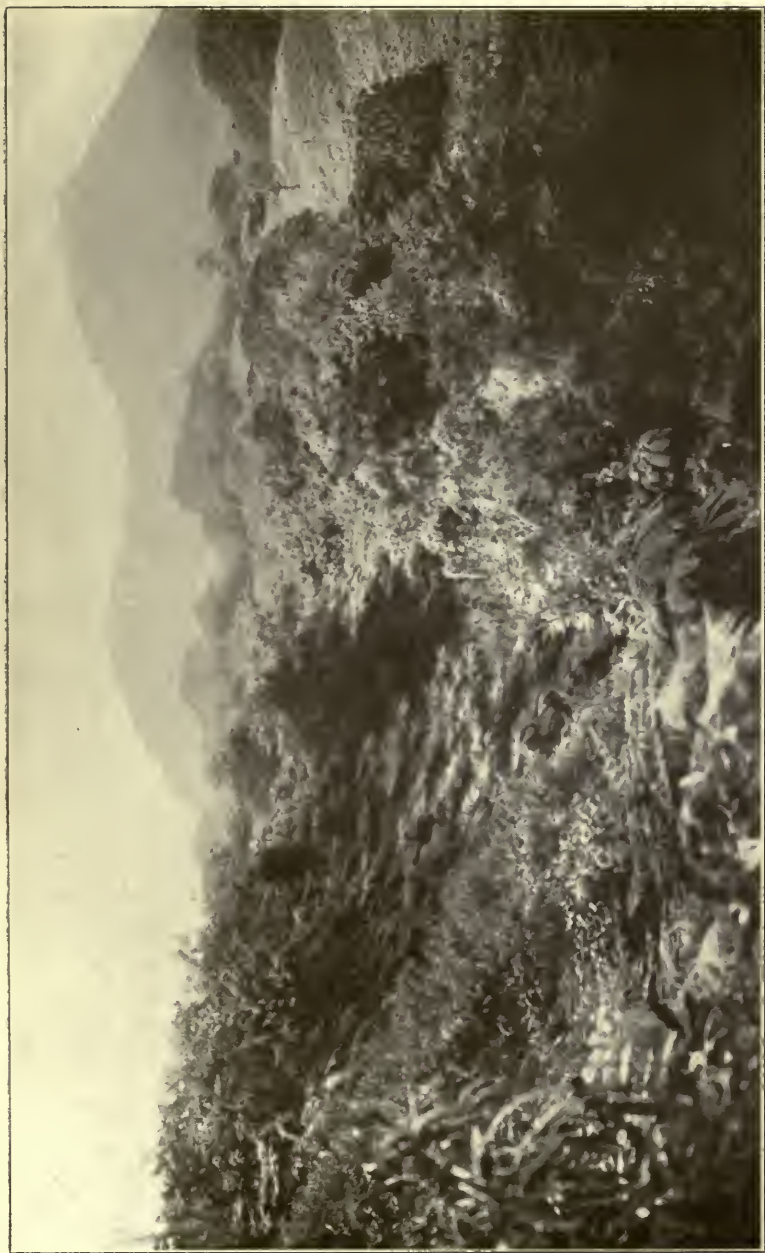
Malaria is not unknown, but it is not very prevalent, whilst dysentery is almost non-existent owing to the excellent water supply. The importance of a good water supply can be estimated only by those who know by experience how unfortunately most of the mainland towns are situated in this respect.

Cases of sleeping-sickness have occurred among the coloured labourers on the plantations, and I have personally verified the existence of *glossinæ*; it is, however, probable that these cases were due to accidental infection, which could have been avoided by taking adequate precautions. Tsetse flies seem to be absent, at any rate a fine herd of cattle has flourished for many years on the Vivour plantation near San Carlos.

If at some future date the plantations are properly exploited, it will be quite possible for Europeans as well as coloured labourers to live above the level of the sultry and oppressive coast climate, as is the case in St Thomas.

The forest, which covers the whole island excepting where it has been cleared by human agency, and at the top of the mountains, is divisible according to its altitude into various zones which will be alluded to in the present instance only in so far as they bear on the question of cultivation. The lower zone in the moist, warm regions of the coast may be briefly designated as the cocoa zone, its upper limit being at an altitude of 1300 feet. The upper forest zone extends above this level for another 1300 feet, and is eminently adapted for the cultivation of the oil palm.

The cocoa zone is the one that interests us principally,



207. Grass-land of Moka with crater.



208. *Mimulopsis violacea* in the grass-land of Moka, tree ferns in the background.



209. Tree ferns and parasites in the grass-land of Moka.

since it is here alone that plantations so far exist. Unfortunately there exists no map of Fernando Po which gives the area of country up to an altitude of 1300 feet, so that it is hard to give an accurate estimate of the ground available for cocoa plantations. I am, however, of opinion that 280 square miles is not too high a computation, exclusive of the south coast.

Is this land really adapted for the cultivation of cocoa ? In reply to this question I can only state that the plantations at San Carlos are as prosperous as it is possible to imagine ; when I saw them the branches were yellow with fruit, and the trees seemed in splendid condition. The planters reckon to obtain nearly 100,000 pounds of fruit per square mile, at any rate from strong twelve to fifteen year old trees in a good year.

Obviously, therefore, Fernando Po possesses all the necessary qualifications for a cocoa island of the first rank, and considering its size, it ought to far surpass the little island of St Thomas. But when we ask what has been achieved, we are told : very little indeed. The island has never produced more than six million pounds in the year, whereas in the year 1909 the island of St Thomas exported over sixty million pounds. Coffee is scarcely to be reckoned as an export, and the same may be said of palm oil, although formerly a certain amount of the latter was produced.

We did not come across many of the Bubis, and I am unable to supply any new facts concerning them. I will, however, give a short account of them, derived from the books at my disposal.

Nothing positive is known regarding the origin of the Bubis and their connection with the tribes of the mainland. The older authorities state that there is no tradition of their having invaded the island, but

in the reports of the Spanish mission, on the other hand, there is an account of their having landed in canoes in the neighbourhood of Concepcion. The men are brown-skinned, of medium height, and possess powerfully developed muscles. Their lower extremities are comparatively short, but unusually strong. Their features are not of a pronounced negro type, and most of them wear thick beards. Some of the women's faces are attractive, with a gentle expression.

Their long seclusion in their island home, together with an intimate contact with Nature, have developed among the Bubis certain characteristics which are in many respects of a high moral order. A strong love for their country, loyal public spirit at all events in their villages, independence and a constant adherence to their ancient manners and customs are in marked contrast to the characteristics of many of the trading tribes of the mainland. These qualities explain how the Bubis have been able to resist the influence of European civilisation. Their requirements are extraordinarily few. In Baumann's time they wore practically no clothes, and in remote villages this is the case even at the present time. On the other hand they many of them wear plaited hats of an immense size that serve the purpose of umbrellas. Their houses are very simple, and their furniture is of the most primitive description. They possess no iron implements other than those introduced by Europeans.

Tattooing is unknown among the Bubis, but both men and women display peculiar scars, which they regard as adornments, wide incisions across their cheeks from ear to nose. The women wear wide bands round their upper arms, also strings of pierced shell fragments.



210 and 211. Bubi of San Carlos.



212. Annobon from the north.



213. Village of Palé with mission.



214. Village of Palé.

We were particularly struck by these incisions and bracelets (illus. 210, 211,) never having seen anything like them in all our travels. In spite of their low order of civilisation, they are industrious husbandmen; their koko (*Colocasia*) fields are carefully tilled and fenced in. They also cultivate excellent yams (*Dioscorea*) and bananas; cassada (*manioc*) is unknown to them as it was to the negroes of the mainland up to the discovery of America.

Their morals are of a very high order. Allen writes about them in 1841 as follows:—"It is impossible to speak too highly of the character of these peculiar people. They are generous and hospitable towards strangers, in their own simple fashion; they are kindly disposed to one another in their everyday life, and are always willing to assist one another both in sickness and in health. They are brave, but show a conciliatory spirit, and an unwillingness to shed blood, even that of their enemies. They are not cruel in battle, and their religious ceremonies are not stained with human blood. Murder is unknown among them, and one of their chiefs earned for himself the nickname of 'the executioner' because he cut down one of his subjects whom he caught in the act of stealing from the boat belonging to a man-of-war. This shows, too, how averse they are to theft." Bigamy is, however, allowed.

From this account, which is confirmed by Baumann, it is evident that the Bubis are a congenial people, whose so-called aversion towards European culture is more pleasing than the veneer of civilisation assumed by many another negro tribe. Of recent years they have certainly discarded some of their exclusiveness, whilst retaining a strong sense of independence which

renders them unwilling to work on the plantations in the service of Europeans.

This is regrettable since it is the dearth of labourers that prevents Fernando Po from making the most of its natural resources. It is very difficult to induce labourers from the mainland to undertake work in Fernando Po, and for this state of affairs Europeans have themselves chiefly to blame. Croo-boys have repeatedly been engaged on the Liberian coast to work in Lagos or the Cameroons, and have then been conveyed to Fernando Po. When they have finished their work they have been paid in cheap wares instead of in money, so that it is not surprising if they decline to be entrapped a second time. It is even more difficult to secure the services of the natives in other parts of the mainland, for example in Spanish Guinea, so that the labour question, always a difficult problem in Africa, is disastrous to the prosperity of Fernando Po.

Nevertheless, the land is so fertile that we must not give up all hopes of an improvement in the situation. At the same time the climatic conditions are most favourable for tropical plantations as well as being comparatively healthy, the prairies of Moka are admirably adapted for the rearing of cattle and for the cultivation of European vegetables, the harbours are excellent, in fact there are present all the conditions necessary for assuring a brilliant future to this beautiful country.

I will conclude with the words of the explorer Baumann, and express the hope that this pearl of the Gulf of Guinea, aptly named Formosa by its discoverer, may at length awake from its thousand years' slumber, and enjoy the prosperity it deserves.

CHAPTER XXVI

ANNOBON

ON the 2nd of September Schultze and I took ship from Santa Isabella and landed at Annobon, the smallest and most remote of the four Guinea Islands. It was so-called (the good year, *i.e.* the new year) because it was discovered on New Year's Day 1471 by Ioao de Santarem, a Portuguese seaman, just as Fernando Po was discovered by the Portuguese Captain Fernao do Poo.

The Spanish Government steamer "Annobon" visits the island every alternate month, forming the only connecting link with the outer world; I cannot say, however, that she inspires one with any great confidence. She is old, small and dirty, and should long ago have earned a place on the scrap-heap. The provisions were plentiful and good, though better adapted to Spanish than German palates. Excepting for the dinner table, the whole of this restricted and inconvenient little vessel was full of dirt, so that our voyage was not an unmixed blessing. And so very, very slow!

The first day we steamed from the capital to San Carlos, in order to take up a few passengers. Towards nightfall we set off again, and in the afternoon of the second day we passed Prince's Isle. On the third day we passed St Thomas and enjoyed "one of the most picturesque coast views in the world." The peaks were indeed thickly wrapped in clouds during our

passage, but we were filled with astonishment at the sight of the ever-varying and rare mountain shapes, precipitous cones, and apparently inaccessible needles of rock, such as are seldom found in volcanic regions.

On the morning of the 5th of September Annobon at length rose out of the sea like some proud island citadel. We were anxiously wondering whether our hopes and expectations would be realised. We swept the island eagerly with our telescopes, which revealed a little rocky island, with steep cliffs and rugged precipices, behind which rise wooded mountains, whose highest peaks are concealed by a mass of low-lying clouds. In the foreground is the Pico do Fogo, a landmark of Annobon owing to its curious truncated cone shape. (Illus. 212.)

The great, white Mission building is visible from a considerable distance. On a closer acquaintance the shore displays a stretch of sand inclosed by a hedge of palm trees, and the grey houses of Palé. (Illus. 213-216.) As we approach we observe how parched and barren is the flat country facing north, as well as the lower mountain slopes. We have fled from the rainy season in Fernando Po, and behold here it is midsummer.

At last we are at anchor some way from the shore, and making as much fuss as though we were a 6000-ton vessel at the very least. And yet the beautiful blue-green water is so clear that every pebble, every shell can be distinguished at the bottom.

The Delegado, a bilious-looking Spanish non-commissioned officer, comes on board, accompanied by the genial and rotund Pater Ferrando, the Superior of the Mission, whilst the laughing and screaming natives press round the steamer in their little canoes.

We land in the large Mission boat, and set foot in Annobon with our expectations already considerably damped.

We soon made up our minds not to remain in the lower part of the island, for the dry season was evidently at its height, and the dust and drought were intolerable. So we decided to make the famous Crater Lake our headquarters, 900 feet above the sea level, at the foot of the Pico do Fogo. With the help of the Delegado we soon secured the services of a number of natives, chiefly women, and the very same afternoon all our baggage was carried up. We climbed the winding path, at first amid oil palms, inclosed by low lava walls, then through small cassada fields hedged in by *Jatropha Curcas* Lin., then through barren prairies plentifully sprinkled with fragments of lava, and finally through a dry, sparse wood of oil-palms of which the undergrowth is composed of all kinds of bushes, including wild oranges, laden with fruit. At last the climber's view embraces the still, crater lake, a perfect jewel of picturesque beauty. (Illus. 217.) We pitched our tents on its northern shore, beneath the oil palms, not far from the point where, during the rainy season, the lake discharges its surplus water over the edge of the crater.

The North of the island is formed by the volcano whose crater supplies the bed of the lake. Towards the South the crater wall is highest and best preserved; it falls in terraces of about eight hundred feet, and, though fairly steep, it is covered with trees. (Illus. 218.)

East and west the side of the crater is lower, until on the North it forms merely a broad, rounded wall, where at its lowest point the lake pours away its superfluous water during the rainy season. Towards the North-East an independent rock rises from the edge of

the crater : the Pico do Fogo (illus. 219) an irregularly three-sided, truncated cone, composed of a light grey stone, which is not to my knowledge found elsewhere in the island, and is quite different to the regularly stratified material thrown up by the volcano, of which the greater part of the island is composed.

On the right side of illustration 212 another small island is missing, which is separated from the main island by a deep channel. Seen from the North, it presents a flat, rounded appearance, and has consequently been named Tortuga (tortoise). This island was originally formed by the peak of a volcano, and on its South the stratified inner wall of the crater can clearly be seen, the strata being undermined to an unusual extent by the weather. (Illus. 221.) The most surprising thing about it is that, as far as we know, the stone of which it is composed is altogether wanting on the main island, being volcanic material of a deep red colour, which recalls a very dark laterit.

The lake was just now at its lowest level, and its waters troubled. The floor of the crater round the lake and its lower slopes were wooded with oil palms. Amongst them grew numerous wild orange trees, bearing a rich display of golden fruit, which was not, however, so pleasant to eat as it appeared. The flesh was juicy, but exceedingly bitter, and nothing but the terrible thirst induced by the long and fatiguing climb up the barren slopes would have induced us to welcome these fruits as a refreshment.

Above the belt of oil palms is a wood, composed principally of two trees : a beautiful, evergreen oil tree (*Olea Welwitschii*) whose large, dark willow-like leaves were in marked contrast to the leafless stems of



215. House of the government officials in Palé.



216. Mission: Pico do Fogo in background.



217 Crater lake with Pico do Fogo

a deciduous *Anacardacia* clothed only with bearded lichen; the first leaf buds appear in October before the foliage. This mingling of evergreen and deciduous trees lends a peculiar character to the forest, but the blossom of both these trees is scanty. There are few bushes in the underwood; some scattered ferns grow between the boulders, mostly as epiphytes, but there is scarcely any herbaceous undergrowth. During the rainy season everything probably has a fresher appearance, but I doubt whether even then the collector would find much to reward his pains. Mine was certainly but a sorry share.

The fauna was even more scanty. The only mammalia that we encountered were wild, black hogs, rats, and vampire bats, and the only birds were a pretty, brick-red fly-catcher, a grey-green hooded bird (*Zosterops*), and a small owl; there were, of course, no water birds. The doves and crested guinea fowls were probably derived from domesticated ancestors. Schultze, to his great regret, found no butterflies.

I have not yet thoroughly studied my botanical specimens, but I can say at any rate that plant life is but scantily represented on the island of Annobon, and that what there is of it is composed of the most heterogenous elements of African vegetation, mingled together in the most surprising manner. This may readily be explained on the supposition that the flora is entirely exogenous, having been brought over from the mainland by means of ships, currents of air, or birds. Endemic varieties are either entirely absent, or else they are nearly related to the species found on the mainland and in St Thomas. In this respect, therefore, Annobon differs markedly from Saint Helena, which possessed a very characteristic flora of its own,

at all events until it was destroyed, principally by the goats.

As there was so little botanising to be done we had all the more time to devote to a study of the structure of the island, and Schultze was able to make numerous measurements, and to survey the roads in every direction with a view to the construction of the first map ever projected of Annobon. All our expeditions were conducted under the greatest difficulties. Considering the small size of the island, which is only four and a half miles long and one and a half miles wide, we had supposed that the task of exploring it in every direction would be an easy one. We were greatly mistaken. The precipitous slopes loaded with boulders and rubble necessitated the most laborious climbing, and an excursion, for example, to the village of Santa Cruz on the west coast, which was not more than two and a half miles as the crow flies from our camp beside the Crater Lake, took us a whole day. Even a walk round the lake is not perfectly simple, although there is a native footpath. At intervals, as for example at the foot of the Pico do Fogo, the pedestrian encounters a chaos of rubble, which must be laboriously scrambled through. A spot on the eastern shore awakens sad memories, for it was the camping ground of the explorer Boyd Alexander, who was murdered later in Wadai.

The ascent of the Pico do Fogo was particularly fatiguing and unpleasant. The most accessible side is from the edge of the crater to the East of the lake, *i.e.* behind the right face of the mountain (illus. 217); and for people who are not absolutely devoid of giddiness this is in fact the only possible route. Between the boulders and rubble the slope is covered only with grass and a few gnarled and scattered bushes. The

weather has broken up the stone into loose blocks, the grass clumps afford no safe hold, and whilst climbing one has an ever-present and most disagreeable feeling of insecurity. On the way down I became so dizzy that but for the assistance of my trusty Ekomeno I should scarcely have reached home in safety.

This ascent had important results, since from the summit of the little pyramid we enjoyed a complete panorama, and Schultze was able to make various measurements.

In books the height of the Pico do Fogo is usually given as 3280 feet. This however is not correct, for Schultze measured it and found it to be only 1475 feet above the sea level, and 590 feet above the level of the Crater Lake.

From the summit of the Pico do Fogo we saw behind the high southern edge of the crater a wooded range of mountains which seemed to be the loftiest in the island. A native finally consented to guide us thither; at first he was not very willing, alleging that it would be very cold up there.

We made our way along the western edge of the crater, and soon reached the flat depression between the Quioveo and the North Crater. On the other side of this saddle-shaped depression is the valley of the Rio San Juan, which flows in an easterly direction. Up here, in a region which is often enveloped in mist and rain when the sun is shining lower down, the industrious inhabitants of Palé, that is to say the women, cultivate bananas. Oil palms, too, are more luxuriant here than on the plain, or in the basin of the Crater Lake. Cocoa plantations have been attempted, but as might have been anticipated, without success. Cocoa requires a much warmer and more equable climate, combined

with plenty of moisture in the form of copious showers, but not direct contact with the clouds.

At a level of about 1600 feet begins the fog region of Annobon. Every day dense masses of cloud are driven up from the sea by the prevailing south-westerly winds, and congregate round the highest peaks; Santa Mina, Quioveo, and the southern edge of the North Crater. The temperature is moderate and the atmosphere is charged with moisture, thus favouring the growth of all tree ferns, mosses, lichens, hymenophylls, and some varieties of begonia.

We proceeded through this wooded foggy region along a precipitous path to the summit, which is set like an old ruined castle upon the broader ridge. Here the old, gnarled, weather-beaten trees are so overgrown with epiphytes that they present a distorted appearance. (Illus. 220.) I have never seen any epiphytes so well developed as on the summits of Quioveo and Santa Mina.

After having several times made the circuit of the crater from our camp beside the lake, having ascended the Fogo once, and the Quioveo several times, and after making an excursion to the village of Santa Cruz, we removed our camp to the shelter of a hedge of koko palms on the shore, not far from the Mission. We had hoped that after spending a fortnight on the island we should be picked up by the Spanish steamer which goes from Fernando Po to Prince's Isle on the 18th of September. The Deputy Governor, Julio Pantoga, had not been able to make any definite promise, but we had begged Herr Krull to lay our request before the Governor on his return from Spanish Guinea, and we were counting on his acceding to our wish. The 21st of September passed, however, with no sign of a



218. Crater lake with the high southern edge of the crater.



219. Pico do Fogo on the Crater lake.



220. Tree with parasites on the summit of Quioveo.



221. Island of Tortuga, stratified and strongly eroded crater-edge.

steamer's smoke on the horizon. So we had to possess our souls in patience for another fortnight.

At first we were bitterly disappointed, but later on we realised that it was really for the best, as otherwise our investigations would have been incomplete, and we should probably have missed the most beautiful part of the island. We turned our steps towards the South and South-East, in the direction of Santa Mina.

We reached our destination easily and comfortably in the little native canoes, whereas, if we had gone by land, it would have been a most fatiguing expedition. These canoes are tiny in comparison with the huge hollowed trees employed on the Congo and its tributaries, for the forest of Annobon comprises comparatively small trees, even the *Bombax* being a dwarf compared with its immense representative in the Cameroons or in Fernando Po. The Annobon natives are, however, so skilful in the manipulation of their small craft that they inspire complete confidence. We skimmed over the clear, deep water beside the precipitous walls of a picturesque grotto to which adhered the nests of lively, black sea-swallows, far above human reach. (Illus. 229.)

We turned a low headland, through which the surf had worn away a rocky entrance, and landed on the San Pedro beach. (Illus. 224.) The situation of this village is very different from that of Palé in the North. There the houses stand in long, even rows on the plain behind a broad stretch of sand; here the village is built at the entrance of a narrow gorge, shut in by steep, wooded slopes, surmounted by perpendicular precipices, and in the foreground there are no sand-banks but a beach covered with volcanic debris, rounded by the surf. Only small, light boats, such

as the natives use, could land here without sustaining damage. The space being very limited, the thatched, wooden houses are crowded irregularly on the rising ground, and the intervening passages are narrow, twisted, and dirty. The numerous black hogs that wander about between the houses do not add to the general cleanliness. A great many of these useful animals are reared both here and in Santa Cruz on the west coast, but are rarely seen in the capital Palé.

From San Pedro we had no great difficulty in climbing Santa Mina, the loftiest and most beautiful mountain in the island. We followed a steep path immediately behind the village through a sparse wood of oil palms, which are used for the preparation of palm wine. There were also numerous wild orange trees, whose fruit was as sour as that of the trees growing on the North Crater.

Higher up, the banana plantations betokened the foggy region. In one place we saw traces of wild hogs, and on a subsequent ascent we met some natives carrying a young boar which they had hunted with dogs and killed with an axe. The animal closely resembled his brethren in the village of San Pedro. The epiphytic vegetation that we saw at the summit defies all description, and far surpassed that of the Quioveo. We were much surprised at the appearance of the tree-ferns growing at the summit of Santa Mina. Their feeble and crooked stems bore scanty and distorted fronds, blown to one side by the continuous south-westerly winds. It is strange that they should be entirely wanting on the Quioveo, for the seeds must be borne thither by the wind from Santa Mina, and yet there was not a single example to be seen.

Fresh masses of cloud were continually driven up



222. Summit of Santa Mina.



223. Lava cliffs.



224. Beach of San Pedro.

from the South, and the view was seldom clear for a moment.

I got no further than San Pedro and Santa Mina, but Schultze went further afield, sometimes by boat, and sometimes by land, the village of San Antonio being his southernmost point. It was unfortunately impossible to make a circuit of the island by boat, since the sea was too heavy off the south-west and west coasts. But there was plenty to do on the North, for here, at a short distance from our camp, the lava cliffs offered a rich field for collecting and observing marine animals and seaweeds. When the lava stream from the North Crater rushed headlong into the sea, its boiling masses were suddenly cooled by the water, and cracked into splinters, forming a labyrinth of headlands, islands, and cliffs, whose black masses stand out clearly against the white foam of the surf. (Illus. 225.)

A light line is drawn round the black cliffs and shores of Annobon; this is due to the growth of a peculiar calcareous sea-weed or *Corallinacea*, which at low tide is just washed by the waves, and at high tide just reaches out of the water. It is related to the red sea-weed growing on the shores of the North Sea, although they have nothing in common as regards their external appearance, the Annobon sea-weed rather resembling the animal coral. It has a hard, stony structure, part of which forms a crust over the rock, and part displays a leafy structure; it often collects in large clumps composed of numerous intertwining ramifications. (Illus. 228.) The colour varies from a dull reddish yellow, or a dirty greyish yellow, to a delicate pink or deep purple. Where it is exposed to the sun the colour is pale and bleached, and it is

strongest and purest in the crusty deposits to be seen in shady grottos and channels through which the water washes.

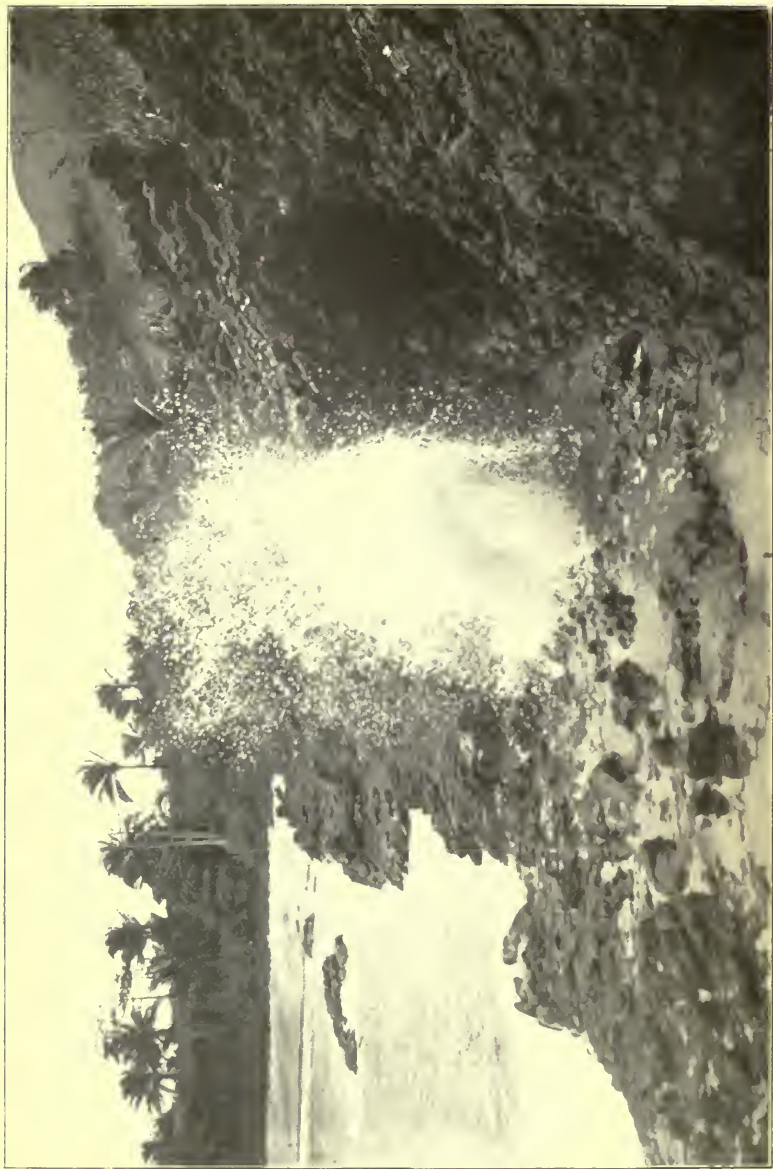
We had more than enough time for wandering along the beach, and studying marine life. On the 5th of October we gazed eagerly out to sea, hoping to catch sight of the smoke of the Spanish steamer that was to fetch us away. But we looked in vain. We learned later in Santa Isabella that the Governor had been willing to send the Prince's Island steamer to Annobon, but that the sum asked for thus lengthening the voyage was in Herr Krull's opinion too high. He accordingly telegraphed to Hamburg to ask that a Cameroon Government steamer might be sent to fetch us.

We soon grew very tired of waiting. We had everything that we could desire in the way of provisions: eggs, fish, bananas, and yams in abundance, and the natives were most friendly and ready to help us in every possible way. Apart from the plague of mosquitoes, the Palé shore would have been an ideal seaside resort. It was the uncertainty that we found so trying, and we imagined every conceivable reason for the non-appearance of the steamer. At last we had made up our minds that our involuntary Robinson Crusade on the island of Annobon would last until the beginning of November, when the Spanish steamer was expected in the ordinary course of events. Early on the 13th of October, however, our "boys" roused us with the welcome cry: "Steamer live for come!"

A vessel was indeed coming from the direction of St Thomas, which we soon recognised as the Cameroon steamer "Nachtigal." We set off the same evening,



225. Lava cliffs in the north-west.



226. Surf geyser.

and on the morning of the 15th of October we steamed into the harbour of Santa Isabella. Our subsequent experiences have already been described in the previous chapter, namely the exploration of the southern part of Fernando Po, and the ascent of the Peak.

I will close with a few remarks respecting the history of Annobon and its inhabitants.

About three hundred years ago the island was colonised with negro slaves from St Thomas, from whom the present inhabitants are descended. In 1778 Annobon, together with Fernando Po, was annexed by Spain. But the expedition of Count Argelejos under Primo de Rivera was repulsed by the Portuguese, who asserted that they had long been in possession of the island, and declared themselves ready to defend it by force of arms. The Spaniards thereupon withdrew, and after the failure of this expedition they troubled themselves even less about Annobon than about Fernando Po.

Soon afterwards the Portuguese must have abandoned it of their own free will, for the British Niger expedition of 1841 found no Europeans on the island. The natives had long been left to their own devices, and formed a republican community with a "Governor" at its head, whose term of office always lasted until ten ships had visited the island !

The religion of Annobon was a mixture of Roman Catholicism and fetishism. There was a church a hundred feet in length, which differed however from the ordinary dwelling houses only in its size. On the top of the Fogo, which Allen named "Pico massa fina" there stood formerly three crosses.

The Spanish expeditions that visited Fernando Po also came to Annobon, but there was no permanent

settlement of the Spaniards until the foundation of the Mission in the year 1885.

The Mission was by no means well received. The elders of the little republic felt that their authority was threatened, and induced the population for many months to avoid all intercourse with the missionaries.

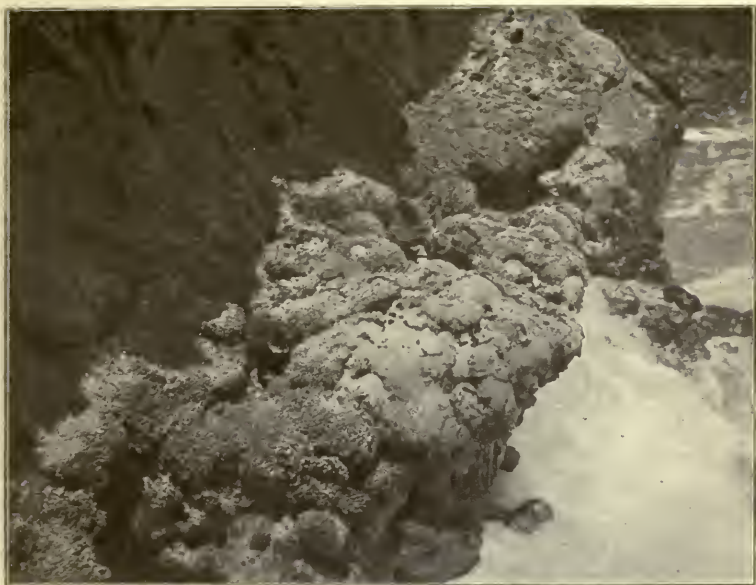
Gradually they came to a better understanding, but even at the present day the influence of the Mission is not very profound. The fact that the natives were already Christians was more of a hindrance than a help; they had, as they have to-day, little old chapels scattered all over the island; they had their "iglesia parroquial" in Palé, and they had their black "cura" who preached to them on feast days and baptised their infants; they had therefore no use for the Spaniards who would not even recognise their ancient customs as Christianity!

At the present time the Mission has expanded, at any rate outwardly. (Illus. 216.) The whitewashed church is 100 feet long and 40 feet wide, and is very tastefully decorated. The roof has an elaborate cross-shaped vault made of wood. Whilst we were there a large dwelling house adjoining the church was nearing completion.

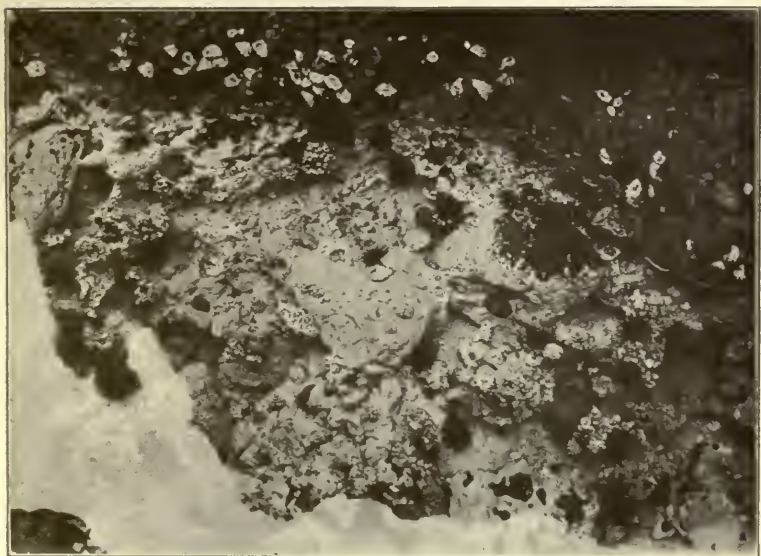
We were very favourably impressed by the natives, who are comparatively industrious, and remarkably honest, unlike the majority of liberated slaves.

The population is between 1000 and 1500, most of whom inhabit the capital Palé; the rest live in San Pedro, Santa Cruz, or San Antonio.

The men busy themselves with fishing and the preparation of palm wine, whilst the women till the fields. All the morning everyone works hard, and



227. Cliffs with calcareous algae.



228. Calcareous algae and sea-urchins in a flat basin.



229. Steep coast to the east with cavern.



230. West coast with Bird Island, slope of Quioveo.

in the afternoon they rest. Fishing is an important source of food for the inhabitants, who employ lines, nets, and harpoons with equal skill. With the latter they transfix the sharks and sperm-whales that arrive in shoals at certain times of the year.

THE END



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